

ENGLISH POETRY
OF THE
NINETEENTH
CENTURY

—II—

ELLIOTT
FOERSTER

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ENGLISH POETRY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

*A Connected Representation of Poetic Art
and Thought from 1755 to 1914*



ENGLISH POETRY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1914

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ENGLISH POETRY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

*A Connected Representation of Poetic Art
and Thought from 1798 to 1914*

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New York

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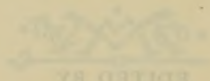
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OF THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY

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NORMAN FORSTER, A.M.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

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TO THE MEMORY OF
WILLIAM DEWITT HYDE
President of Bowdoin College, 1885-1917,

AND

EDWARD KIDDER GRAHAM
President of the University of North Carolina, 1914-1918:

LOVERS OF POETRY
AND WISE TEACHERS OF THE CONDUCT OF LIFE

PREFACE

IN this volume we have attempted not only an extensive, but also a coherent and well proportioned, representation of the poetry of England from about 1798 to 1914. Both the need and the feasibility of such a book have recently become quite decided. Very much fresh light has been turned upon the relationship of poetry since 1870 to that which preceded. Indeed, the Great War and related factors have thrown into better perspective the whole poetic and cultural movement of the past hundred years. By attending closely to the central drift of that movement, we have tried to win beyond those twin perils which have ever beset the collector of nineteenth century literature—on the one hand, a narrow wilfulness, on the other, choppy chaos. We have aimed at a book which, though always concerned with particular poets and poems, is concerned, through all and above all, with the poetry of the nineteenth century conceived as a whole.

Every selection has been considered at once for its individual poetic distinction and its significance as part of the whole. Hence the great bulk of space has naturally gone to the dozen or so leading poets of the century; while at the same time no poem of theirs has been included to illustrate a stage of personal development lacking in general import. From the secondary and minor poets we have collected, together with their few distinguished longer pieces (e.g., Fitzgerald's "Rubaiyat"), some hundred poems which are at once very brief, fairly typical of their authors, and highly suggestive of the main trend of nineteenth-century poetic art and thought. The extraordinary personal variety of that epoch, so to speak, is thus represented in comparatively small space, and without loss of centrality. An unusual amount of space is properly given to significant narrative and meditative verse, including a number of pieces here printed entirely for the first time in a nineteenth-century collection (e.g., Tennyson's "In Memoriam," Morris's "The Golden Apples").

Order of poems. In arranging the selections, we have aimed at avoiding both the wilfulness of personal predilection and the chaos of a slavish adherence to chronological detail. In general, the poems follow the order of their dates, which are noted under their titles in the text: the date of composition when known, otherwise the date of first publication. But we have brought together pieces closely and obviously related in spirit when they belong to the same year, or when the interval between them is so meaningless as to be negligible. This interval, except in the case of certain selections from minor writers, is rarely so much as half a dozen years. But such care has been given to the position of each poem that, more often than not, it will be found to follow one which it effectively supplements, or to precede one which it effectively introduces. The book thus conveys more poetry than it prints. For very often from two related poems, read in sequence, the reader can frame, as Browning might say, not a third poem but a star.

Notes. The Notes follow out the main intention of the text. Significant relationships between successive poems, poets, and groups of poets are emphasized. The frequent suggestions of outside reading, prose as well as verse, are carefully placed and designed. We hope that, like alluring side-roads, they will tempt the reader into excursions which may gradually afford some comprehension of the whole territory of nineteenth-century literature in relation to the highway here travelled. We have aimed to stimulate and guide, instead of obviating, the student's own endeavors. Lengthy comments are excluded. The biographical matter is limited in amount and pertinent to

the text. Unimportant allusions and words included in abridged dictionaries are not covered. Concise but careful directions are given for overcoming difficulties which are likely to obscure, for the average student, the purport and bearing of important poems.

Text. Generally, the text follows present usage in spelling, punctuation, and other matters of form. Old or idiosyncratic modes have been carefully retained from authoritative editions wherever they seemed likely to clarify, for users of this book, the sense or sound intended by the poet; otherwise, they have been still more carefully adjusted.

Explanation of devices. Dates of composition are given in slanting figures, dates of first publication in upright figures. — Titles in italics were assigned by the editors. — All *Sonnets* are thus headed in the Table of Contents, but not in the text. — Selected lines and stanzas are numbered as in the complete works. — When two or more authors appear on *any* page of the text, their names, and not the titles of poems, are given in the page-heading, thus: Sir F. H. Doyle — Edward Fitzgerald. — In the Notes, a reference to a selection printed in this volume is almost always followed by the page-number in parenthesis, and is thus to be distinguished from references to pieces not included.

Acknowledgments. Professor Stanley P. Chase of Union College contributed the introductions to Patmore, Fitzgerald, Cory, MacDonald, Christina Rossetti, Dobson, Stevenson, Kipling, Davidson, Housman, Yeats, Russell, Francis Thompson, and Masefield, and also a number of valuable suggestions in the field of recent poetry. For help in solving particular difficulties we are indebted to Mr. Paul Elmer More, Dean Nixon and Professor F. W. Brown of Bowdoin College, and the librarians of Harvard College, Bowdoin College, and the University of North Carolina.

We are greatly obliged to authors and publishers who have permitted us to use copyrighted verse, and wish to make particular acknowledgment to the following for the poems named: — Messrs. D. Appleton and Company: "Say not that the past is dead" (or, "Unconscious Cerebration") by W. E. H. Lecky. — Messrs. Dodd, Mead and Company: "Heaven," "Peace," and "The Soldier" by Rupert Brooke; "To the New Men" by John Davidson; "Song's Apostasy" by Sir William Watson. — Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Messrs. Doubleday, Page and Company: "The Last Chantey" (from *The Seven Seas*) and "Sons of Martha" (from *The Years Between*). — Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons: "The Morning Drum-Call" by R. L. Stevenson, and "The Burden of Strength" by George Meredith. — Mrs. William Sharp: "The White Peace" by "Fiona Macleod" (William Sharp), from Vol. VII (Poems and Dramas) of the Collected Edition published by Messrs. Duffield and Company. — The Macmillan Company: Proem of "Fires," "The Ice," "On Hampstead Heath," "Prometheus" by W. W. Gibson; "Nature's Questioning," "The Darkling Thrush," "George Meredith," "The Wind Blew Words," "The Statue of Liberty" and "A Thought in Two Moods" by Thomas Hardy; "Eve" by Ralph Hodgson; "Men are made human," "Ah, we are neither heaven nor earth," and "Tewkesbury Road" by John Masefield; "The Great Breath" and "Inheritance" by G. W. Russell ("A.E."); "Into the Twilight" by W. B. Yeats; and copyrighted texts of poems by Christina Rossetti and Tennyson.

G. R. E.
N. F.

September, 1923.

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George W. H. ...

ENGLISH POETRY
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

ENGLISH POETRY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

PART ONE: THE EARLIER NINETEENTH CENTURY

SAMUEL ROGERS

(1763-1855)

A WISH

(1786)

Mine be a cot beside the hill.

A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook, that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.

The swallow, oft, beneath my thatch 5
Shall twitter from her clay-built nest;
Oft shall the pilgrim lift the latch,
And share my meal, a welcome guest.

Around my ivied porch shall spring
Each fragrant flower that drinks the 10
dew;

And Lucy, at her wheel, shall sing
In russet-gown and apron blue.

The village-church, among the trees,
Where first our marriage-vows were
given,

With merry peals shall swell the breeze, 15
And point with taper spire to Heaven.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(1770-1850)

From AN EVENING WALK

(1787-89)

Sunset in the Lake Country

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to
view

The spacious landscape change in form
and hue!

Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood 100
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood;
There, objects, by the searching beams be-
trayed,

Come forth, and here retire in purple
shade;

Even the white stems of birch, the cottage
white,

Soften their glare before the mellow
light; 105

The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage
wide

Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-house
hide,

Shed from their sides, that face the sun's
slant beam,

Strong flakes of radiance on the tremulous
stream:

Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty
cloud 110

Mounts from the road, and spreads its
moving shroud;

The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of
fire,

Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is
lost entire.

Into a gradual calm the breezes sink,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still
brink; 115

There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage
sleep,

And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy
deep:

And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening
streaks;

Here, plots of sparkling water tremble
bright 120

With thousand thousand twinkling points
 of light;
 There, waves that, hardly weltering, die
 away,
 Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray;
 And now the whole wide lake in deep
 repose
 Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror
 glows, 125
 Save where, along the shady western
 marge,
 Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal
 barge.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE, WHICH
 STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE,
 ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE, COM-
 MANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT

(1795)

Nay, Traveller, rest. This lonely yew-
 tree stands
 Far from all human dwelling: what if
 here
 No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant
 herb?
 What if the bee love not these barren
 boughs?
 Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling
 waves, 5
 That break against the shore, shall lull
 thy mind
 By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

Who he was

That piled these stones and with the
 mossy sod
 First covered, and here taught this aged
 tree 10
 With its dark arms to form a circling
 bower,
 I well remember.—He was one who
 owned
 No common soul. In youth by science
 nursed,
 And led by nature into a wild scene

Of lofty hopes, he to the world went
 forth 15
 A favored being, knowing no desire
 Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the
 taint
 Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and
 hate,
 And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
 All but neglect. The world, for so it
 thought, 20
 Owed him no service; wherefore he at
 once
 With indignation turned himself away,
 And with the food of pride sustained his
 soul
 In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy
 boughs
 Had charms for him; and here he loved
 to sit, 25
 His only visitants a straggling sheep,
 The stone-chat, or the glancing sandpiper:
 And on these barren rocks, with fern and
 heath,
 And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
 Fixing his downcast eye,—he many an
 hour 30
 A morbid pleasure—nourished, tracing here
 An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
 And, lifting up his head, he then would
 gaze
 On the more distant scene,—how lovely
 'tis
 Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it
 became 35
 Far lovelier, and his heart could not sus-
 tain
 The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor,
 that time,
 When nature had subdued him to herself,
 Would he forget those beings to whose
 minds,
 Warm from the labors of benevolence, 40
 The world, and human life, appeared a
 scene
 Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,
 Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
 What he must never feel: and so, lost
 man!
 On visionary views would fancy feed, 45

Till his eye streamed with tears. In this
deep vale σ
He died,—this seat his only monument.

If thou be one whose heart the holy
forms

Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know
that pride,

How'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought
with him

Is in its infancy. The man whose eye 55
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who
might move

The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds

Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to
love; 60

True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward
thought,

Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

WE ARE SEVEN

(1798)

—A simple child,

That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl: 5
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad: 10
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
— Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said, 15
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea. 20

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell, 25
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! — I pray you tell,
Sweet maid, how this may be."

Then did the little maid reply,
 "Seven boys and girls are we; 30
 Two of us in the church-yard lie,
 Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid, 35
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen."

The little maid replied,
 "Twelve steps or more from my mother's
 door,
 And they are side by side. 40

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

“And often after sunset, sir, 45
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay, 50
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played, 55
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with
snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side." 60

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little maid's reply,
"O master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are
dead! 65
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

SIMON LEE

THE OLD HUNTSMAN;
WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS
CONCERNED
(1798)

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old man dwells, a little man, —
'Tis said he once was tall.
Full five and thirty years he lived 5
A running huntsman merry;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee 10
When Echo banded, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days, he little cared
For husbandry or tillage;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse 15
The sleepers of the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind:
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled and was stone-blind. 20
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;

For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves the voices!

But, oh the heavy change! — bereft 25
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred,
see!

Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His master's dead, — and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor; 30
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick; 35
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common. 40

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath 45
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?

Oft, working by her husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do; 50
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labor could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little — all 55
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell. 60
My gentle reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O reader! had you in your mind 65
Such stores as silent thought can bring,

O gentle reader! you would find
 A tale in every thing.
 What more I have to say is short,
 And you must kindly take it: 70
 It is no tale; but, should you think,
 Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
 This old-man doing all he could
 To unearth the root of an old tree, 75
 A stump of rotten wood.
 The mattock tottered in his hand;
 So vain was his endeavor,
 That at the root of the old tree
 He might have worked for ever. 80

"You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
 Give me your tool," to him I said;
 And at the word right gladly he
 Received my proffered aid.
 I struck, and with a single blow 85
 The tangled root I severed,
 At which the poor old man so long
 And vainly had endeavored.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
 And thanks and praises seemed to run 90
 So fast out of his heart, I thought
 They never would have done.
 — I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
 With coldness still returning;
 Alas! the gratitude of men 95
Hath oftener left me mourning.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

(1798)

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
 In that sweet mood when pleasant
 thoughts
 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link 5
The human soul that through me ran;
 And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green
 bower,
 The periwinkle trailed its wreaths; 10
 And 'tis my faith that every flower
 Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
 Their thoughts I cannot measure:
 But the least motion which they made 15
 It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
 To catch the breezy air;
 And I must think, do all I can,
 That there was pleasure there. 20

If this belief from heaven be sent,
 If such be Nature's holy plan,
 Have I not reason to lament
 What man has made of man?

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

(1798)

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,
 Thus for the length of half a day,
 Why, William, sit you thus alone,
 And dream your time away?

"Where are your books?—that light be-
 queathed 5
 To beings else forlorn and blind!
 Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
 From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
 As if she for no purpose bore you; 10
 As if you were her first-born birth,
 And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
 When life was sweet, I knew not why,
 To me my good friend Matthew spake, 15
 And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
 We cannot bid the ear be still;
 Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
 Against or with our will. 20

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum 25
Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may, 30
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED

(1798)

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up, up! my friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head, 5
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has
spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet, 10
How sweet his music! on my life
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things, 15
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness. 20

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,

Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings; 25
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of
things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves; 30
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR

July 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with
the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their moun-
tain-springs

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and 10
view

These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe
fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose them-
selves

'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows,
little lines 15

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral
farms,

Green to the very door; and wreaths of
smoke

Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!

With some uncertain notice, as might seem
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless
 woods, 20
 Or of some hermit's cave, where by his
 fire
 The hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to
 me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the
 din 25

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
 And passing even into my purer mind,
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings
 too 30

Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,
 As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I
 trust, 35

To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed
 mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world, 40
 Is lightened:—that serene and blessed
 mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep 45
 In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the
 power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

If this
 Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how
 oft— 50

In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my
 heart—

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to
 thee, 55

O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the
 woods,

How often has my spirit turned to thee!
 And now, with gleams of half-extin-
 guished thought,

With many recognitions dim and faint,
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity, 60
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the
 sense

Of present pleasure, but with pleasing
 thoughts

That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to
 hope, 65

Though changed, no doubt, from what I
 was when first

I came among these hills; when like a
 roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the
 sides

Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
 Wherever nature led: more like a man 70
 Flying from something that he dreads,
 than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For
nature then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
 And their glad animal movements all gone
 by)

To me was all in all.—I cannot paint 75
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy
 wood,

Their colors and their forms, were then
 to me

An appetite; a feeling and a love, 80
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, nor any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is
 past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for
 this 85

Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other
 gifts

Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
 Abundant recompense. For I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often-
times 90

The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample
 power

To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime 95
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting
suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of
man;

A motion and a spirit, that impels 100
All thinking things, all objects of all
thought,

And rolls through all things. Therefore
am I still

A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains; and of all that we be-
 hold

From this green earth; of all the mighty
 world 105

Of eye, and ear,—both what they half
 create,

And what perceive; well pleased to recog-
 nize

In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the
 nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and
 soul 110

Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,

If I were not thus taught, should I the
 more

Suffer my genial spirits to decay:

For thou art with me here upon the banks
 Of this fair river; thou my dearest
 Friend, 115

My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I
 catch

The language of my former heart, and
 read

My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once, 120
 My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I
 make,

Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privi-
lege,

Through all the years of this our life, to
 lead

From joy to joy: for she can so inform 125
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil
 tongues,

Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish
 men,

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor
 all 130

The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our cheerful faith, that all which we be-
 hold

Is full of blessings. Therefore let the
moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk; 135

And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,

When these wild ecstasies shall be ma-
tured

Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely
 forms, 140

Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh!
 then,

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing
 thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me, 145
 And these my exhortations! Nor, per-
 chance—

If I should be where I no more can hear
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes
 these gleams

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
 That on the banks of this delightful
 stream 150

We stood together; and that I, so long

A worshipper of Nature, hither came
 Unwearied in that service: rather say
 With warmer love — oh! with far deeper
 zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then for-
 get, 155
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty
 cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to
 me
 More dear, both for themselves and for
 thy sake!

THE PRELUDE

(1799-1805)

From BOOK FIRST

Presences of Nature in Boyhood

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew
 up
 Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
 Much favored in my birth-place, and no
 less
 In that beloved Vale to which erelong
 We were transplanted — there were we let
 loose 305
 For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
 Ten birth-days, when among the mountain
 slopes
 Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had
 snapped
 The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
 With store of springes o'er my shoulder
 hung 310
 To range the open heights where wood-
 cocks run
 Along the smooth green turf. Through
 half the night,
 Scudding away from snare to snare, I
 plied
 That anxious visitation; — moon and stars
 Were shining o'er my head. I was
 alone, 315
 And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
 That dwelt among them. Sometimes it
 befell

In these night wanderings, that a strong
 desire
 O'erpowered my better reason, and the
 bird
 Which was the captive of another's toil 320
 Became my prey; and when the deed was
 done
 I heard among the solitary hills
 Low breathings coming after me, and
 sounds
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod. 325

Nor less when spring had warmed the
 cultured vale,
 Moved we as plunderers where the
 mother-bird
 Had in high places built her lodge; though
 mean
 Our object and inglorious, yet the end
 Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have
 hung 330
 Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
 And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
 But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
 Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
 Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that
 time 335
 While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
 With what strange utterance did the loud
 dry wind
 Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not
 a sky
 Of earth — and with what motion moved
 the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit
grows 340
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling to-
gether
 In one society. How strange that all
 The terrors, pains, and early miseries, 345
 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
 Within my mind, should e'er have borne a
 part,
 And that a needful part, in making up
 The calm existence that is mine when I

Am worthy of myself! Praise to the
end! 350

Thanks to the means which Nature deigned
to employ;

Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless
light

Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may
use

Severer interventions, ministry 355
More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I
found

A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.

Straight I unloosed her chain, and step-
ping in 360

Pushed from the shore. It was an act of
stealth

And troubled pleasure, nor without the
voice

Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon, 365
Until they melted all into one track

Of sparkling light. But now, like one who
rows,

Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge, 370
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the gray
sky.

She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat 375
Went heaving through the water like a
swan;

When, from behind that craggy steep till
then

The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black
and huge,

As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. I struck and struck
again, 380

And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars,
and still,

For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I
turned, 385

And through the silent water stole my
way

Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my
bark,—

And through the meadows homeward
went, in grave

And serious mood; but after I had seen 390
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined
sense

Of unknown modes of being; o'er my
thoughts

There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar
shapes 395

Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colors of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms that do not
live

Like living men, moved slowly through the
mind

By day, and were a trouble to my
dreams. 400

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!

Thou Soul that art the eternity of
thought,

That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain

By day or star-light thus from my first
dawn 405

Of childhood didst thou intertwine for
me

The passions that build up our human
soul;

Not with the mean and vulgar works of
man,

But with high objects, with enduring
things—

With life and nature—purifying thus 410
The elements of feeling and of thought,

And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to
me 415

With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among
woods,

At noon and 'mid the calm of summer
nights,

When, by the margin of the trembling
lake, 420

Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
Mine was it in the fields both day and
night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile 425
The cottage windows blazed through twilight
gloom,

I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us — for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and
loud 430

The village clock tolled six, — I wheeled
about,

Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod
with steel,

We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase 435
And woodland pleasures, — the resounding
horn,

The pack loud chiming, and the hunted
hare.

So through the darkness and the cold we
flew,

And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud; 440

The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the
stars

Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the
west 445

The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively

Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous
throng,

To cut across the reflex of a star 450
That fled, and, flying still before me,
gleamed

Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the
wind,

And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning
still 455

The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had
rolled

With visible motion her diurnal round! 460
Behind me did they stretch in solemn
train,

Feebler and feebler, and I stood and
watched

Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the
hills! 465

And Souls of lonely places! can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed

Such ministry, when ye, through many a
year

Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and
hills, 470

Impressed, upon all forms, the characters
Of danger or desire; and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth,

With triumph and delight, with hope and
fear.

Work like a sea? 475

From BOOK SIXTH

Down the Simplon Pass

. . . Downwards we hurried fast,
And, with the half-shaped road which we
had missed, 620
Entered a narrow chasm. The brook and
road

Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy
strait,
And with them did we journey several
hours

At a slow pace. The immeasurable heights
Of woods decaying, never to be de-
cayed, 625

The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent at every turn
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and
forlorn,

The torrents shooting from the clear blue
sky,

The rocks that muttered close upon our
ears, 630

Black drizzling crags that spake by the
way-side

As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and regions of the
heavens,

Tumult and peace, the darkness and the
light— 635

Were all like workings of one mind, the
features

Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
Characters of the great Apocalypse,

The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without
end. 640

That night our lodging was a house
that stood

Alone within the valley, at a point
Where, tumbling from aloft, a torrent
swelled

The rapid stream whose margin we had
trod;

A dreary mansion, large beyond all
need, 645

With high and spacious rooms, deafened
and stunned

By noise of waters, making innocent sleep
Lie melancholy among weary bones.

Uprisen betimes, our journey we re-
newed,

Led by the stream, ere noon-day mag-
nified 650

Into a lordly river, broad and deep,
Dimpling along in silent majesty,
With mountains for its neighbors, and in
view

Of distant mountains and their snowy
tops,

And thus proceeding to Locarno's Lake, 655
Fit resting-place for such a visitant.

Locarno! spreading out in width like
Heaven,

How dost thou cleave to the poetic heart,
Bask in the sunshine of the memory.

From BOOK ELEVENTH

The Poet and the French Revolution

I had approached, like other youths, the
shield

Of human nature from the golden side, 80
And would have fought, even to the death,
to attest

The quality of the metal which I saw.
What there is best in individual man,
Of wise in passion, and sublime in power,
Benevolent in small societies, 85
And great in large ones, I had oft re-
volved,

Felt deeply, but not thoroughly understood
By reason: nay, far from it; they were
yet,

As cause was given me afterwards to
learn,

Not proof against the injuries of the
day; 90

Lodged only at the sanctuary's door,
Not safe within its bosom. Thus pre-
pared,

And with such general insight into evil,
And of the bounds which sever it from
good,

As books and common intercourse with
life 95

Must needs have given—to the inexperi-
enced mind,

When the world travels in a beaten road,
Guide faithful as is needed—I began
To meditate with ardor on the rule

And management of nations; what it is 100
And ought to be; and strove to learn how
far

Their power or weakness, wealth or pov-
erty,

Their happiness or misery, depends
Upon their laws, and fashion of the State.

O pleasant exercise of hope and joy! 105
For mighty were the auxiliars which then
stood

Upon our side, us who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven! O
times,

In which the meagre, stale, forbidding
ways 110

Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!

When Reason seemed the most to assert
her rights

When most intent on making of herself
A prime enchantress — to assist the
work, 115

Which then was going forward in her
name!

Not favored spots alone, but the whole
Earth,

The beauty wore of promise — that which
sets

(As at some moments might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of Paradise itself) 120
The budding rose above the rose full
blown.

What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt
away!

They who had fed their childhood upon
dreams, 125

The play-fellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and
strength

Their ministers, — who in lordly wise had
stirred

Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found
there 130

As if they had within some lurking right

To wield it; — they, too, who of gentle
mood

Had watched all gentle motions, and to
these

Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers
more mild,

And in the region of their peaceful
selves; — 135

Now was it that *both* found, the meek
and lofty

Did both find, helpers to their hearts'
desire,

And stuff at hand, plastic as they could
wish, —

Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia, — subterranean fields, — 140

Or some secreted island, heaven knows
where!

But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us, — the place where, in the end,

We find our happiness, or not at all!

Why should I not confess that Earth
was then 145

To me, what an inheritance, new-fallen,
Seems, when the first time visited, to one
Who thither comes to find in it his
home?

He walks about and looks upon the spot
With cordial transport, moulds it and re-
moulds, 150

And is half-pleased with things that are
amiss,

'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.

An active partisan, I thus convoked
From every object pleasant circumstance
To suit my ends; I moved among man-
kind 155

With genial feelings still predominant;
When erring, erring on the better part,
And in the kinder spirit; placable,
Indulgent, as not uninformed that men
See as they have been taught — An-
tiquity 160

Gives rights to error; and aware, no less
That throwing off oppression must be
work

As well of License as of Liberty;

And above all — for this was more than
all —

Not caring if the wind did now and
then 165

Blow keen upon an eminence that gave
Prospect so large into futurity;

In brief, a child of Nature, as at first,
Diffusing only those affections wider
That from the cradle had grown up with
me, 170

And losing, in no other way than light
Is lost in light, the weak in the more
strong.

In the main outline, such it might be
said

Was my condition, till with open war
Britain opposed the liberties of France. 175
This threw me first out of the pale of
love;

Soured and corrupted, upwards to the
source,

My sentiments; was not, as hitherto,
A swallowing up of lesser things in great,
But change of them into their con-
traries; 180

And thus a way was opened for mistakes
And false conclusions, in degree as gross,
In kind more dangerous. What had been
a pride,

Was now a shame; my likings and my
loves

Ran in new channels, leaving old ones
dry; 185

And hence a blow that, in maturer age,
Would but have touched the judgment,
struck more deep

Into sensations near the heart: meantime,
As from the first, wild theories were
afloat,

To whose pretensions, sedulously urged, 190
I had but lent a careless ear, assured
That time was ready to set all things
right,

And that the multitude, so long oppressed,
Would be oppressed no more.

But when events
Brought less encouragement, and unto
these 195

The immediate proof of principles no more
Could be entrusted, while the events them-
selves,

Worn out in greatness, stripped of novelty,
Less occupied the mind, and sentiments
Could through my understanding's nat-
ural growth 200

No longer keep their ground, by faith
maintained

Of inward consciousness, and hope that
laid

Her hand upon her object — evidence
Safer, of universal application, such
As could not be impeached, was sought
elsewhere. 205

But now, become oppressors in their
turn,

Frenchmen had changed a war of self-
defence

For one of conquest, losing sight of all
Which they had struggled for: up mounted
now,

Openly in the eye of earth and heaven, 210
The scale of liberty. I read her doom,
With anger vexed, with disappointment
sore,

But not dismayed, nor taking to the
shame

Of a false prophet. While resentment
rose

Striving to hide, what nought could heal,
the wounds 215

Of mortified presumption, I adhered
More firmly to old tenets, and, to prove
Their temper, strained them more; and
thus, in heat

Of contest, did opinions every day
Grow into consequence, till round my
mind 220

They clung, as if they were its life, nay
more,

The very being of the immortal soul.

This was the time, when, all things
tending fast

To depravation, speculative schemes —
That promised to abstract the hopes of
Man 225

Out of his feelings, to be fixed thence-
 forth
 For ever in a purer element—
 Found ready welcome. Tempting region
that
 For Zeal to enter and refresh herself,
 Where passions had the privilege to
 work, 230
 And never hear the sound of their own
 names.
 But, speaking more in charity, the dream
 Flattered the young, pleased with ex-
 tremes, nor least
 With that which makes our reason's naked
 self
 The object of its fervor. What de-
 light! 235
 How glorious! in self-knowledge and self-
 rule,
 To look through all the frailties of the
 world,
 And, with a resolute mastery shaking off
 Infirmities of nature, time, and place,
 Build social upon personal liberty, 240
 Which, to the blind restraints of general
 laws,
 Superior, magisterially adopts
 One guide, the light of circumstances,
 flashed
 Upon an independent intellect.
 Thus expectation rose again; thus hope, 245
 From her first ground expelled, grew
 proud once more.
 Oft, as my thoughts were turned to human
 kind,
 I scorned indifference; but, inflamed with
 thirst
 Of a secure intelligence, and sick
 Of other longing, I pursued what
 seemed 250
 A more exalted nature; wished that
 Man
 Should start out of his earthly, worm-like
 state,
 And spread abroad the wings of Liberty,
 Lord of himself, in undisturbed delight—
 A noble aspiration! yet I feel 255
 (Sustained by worthier as by wiser
 thoughts)

The aspiration, nor shall ever cease
 To feel it;—but return we to our course.

Enough, 'tis true—could such a plea
 excuse
 Those aberrations—had the clamorous
 friends 260
 Of ancient institutions said and done
 To bring disgrace upon their very names;
 Disgrace, of which, custom and written
 law,
 And sundry moral sentiments as props
 Or emanations of those institutes, 265
 Too justly bore a part. A veil had been
 Uplifted; why deceive ourselves? in
 sooth,
 'Twas even so; and sorrow for the man
 Who either had not eyes wherewith to see,
 Or, seeing, had forgotten! A strong
 shock 270
 Was given to old opinions; all men's minds
 Had felt its power, and mine was both let
 loose,
 Let loose and goaded. After what hath
 been
 Already said of patriotic love,
 Suffice it here to add, that, somewhat
 stern 275
 In temperament, withal a happy man,
 And therefore bold to look on painful
 things,
 Free likewise of the world, and thence
 more bold,
 I summoned my best skill, and toiled,
 intent
 To anatomize the frame of social life; 280
 Yea, the whole body of society
 Searched to its heart. Share with me,
 Friend! the wish
 That some dramatic tale, endued with
 shapes
 Livelier, and flinging out less guarded
 words
 Than suit the work we fashion, might set
 forth 285
 What then I learned, or think I learned,
 of truth,
 And the errors into which I fell, betrayed
 By present objects, and by reasonings false

From their beginnings, inasmuch as drawn
Out of a heart that had been turned
aside 290

From Nature's way by outward accidents,
And which was thus confounded, more
and more

Misguided, and misguiding. So I fared,
Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims,
creeds,

Like culprits to the bar; calling the
mind, 295

Suspiciously, to establish in plain day
Her titles and her honors; now believing,
Now disbelieving; endlessly perplexed
With impulse, motive, right and wrong,
the ground

Of obligation, what the rule and
whence 300

The sanction; till, demanding formal
proof,

And seeking it in every thing, I lost
All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
Yielded up moral questions in despair. 305

This was the crisis of that strong dis-
ease,

This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I
drooped,

Deeming our blessèd reason of least use
Where wanted most: "The lordly at-
tributes

Of will and choice," I bitterly ex-
claimed, 310

"What are they but a mockery of a
being

Who hath in no concerns of his a test
Of good and evil; knows not what to
fear

Or hope for, what to covet or to shun;
And who, if those could be discerned,
would yet 315

Be little profited, would see, and ask
Where is the obligation to enforce?

And, to acknowledged law rebellious,
still,

As selfish passion urged, would act amiss;
The dupe of folly, or the slave of
crime." 320

Depressed, bewildered thus, I did not
walk

With scoffers, seeking light and gay re-
venge

From indiscriminate laughter, nor sate
down

In reconciliation with an utter waste
Of intellect; such sloth I could not
brook 325

(Too well I loved, in that my spring of
life,

Painstaking thoughts, and truth, their dear
reward),

But turned to abstract science, and there
sought

Work for the reasoning faculty en-
throned

Where the disturbances of space and
time — 330

Whether in matters various, properties
Inherent, or from human will and power
Derived — find no admission. Then it
was —

Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all
good! —

That the belovèd sister in whose sight 335
Those days were passed, now speaking in
a voice

Of sudden admonition — like a brook

That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every
turn,

Companion never lost through many a
league — 340

Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self; for, though bedimmed
and changed

Much, as it seemed, I was no further
changed

Than as a clouded and a waning moon:
She whispered still that brightness would
return; 345

She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth;

And, lastly, as hereafter will be shown,
If willing audience fail not, Nature's
self, 350

By all varieties of human love

Assisted, led me back through opening day
To those sweet counsels between head and
heart

Whence grew that genuine knowledge,
fraught with peace,

Which, through the later sinkings of this
cause, 355

Hath still upheld me, and upholds me
now.

From BOOK TWELFTH

Nature's Healing

Ye motions of delight, that haunt the
sides

Of the green hills; ye breezes and soft
airs, 10

Whose subtle intercourse with breathing
flowers,

Feelingly watched, might teach Man's
haughty race

How without injury to take, to give
Without offence; ye who, as if to show

The wondrous influence of power gently
used, 15

Bend the complying heads of lordly pines,
And, with a touch, shift the stupendous
clouds

Through the whole compass of the sky;
ye brooks,

Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
By day, a quiet sound in silent night; 20

Ye waves, that out of the great deep steal
forth

In a calm hour to kiss the pebbly shore,
Not mute, and then retire, fearing no
storm;

And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is
To interpose the covert of your shades, 25

Even as a sleep, between the heart of man
And outward troubles, between man him-
self,

Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart:

Oh! that I had a music and a voice
Harmonious as your own, that I might
tell 30

What ye have done for me. The morning
shines, —

Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring
returns, —

I saw the Spring return, and could rejoice,
In common with the children of her
love,

Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh
fields, 35

Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
On wings that navigate cerulean skies.

So neither were complacency, nor peace,
Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my
good

Through these distracted times; in Nature
still 40

Glorying, I found a counterpoise in her,
Which, when the spirit of evil reached its
height,

Maintained for me a secret happiness.

From THE RECLUSE

(c. 1800)

On Man, on Nature, and on Human
Life,

Musing in solitude, I oft perceive 755

Fair trains of imagery before me rise,

Accompanied by feelings of delight

Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;

And I am conscious of affecting thoughts

And dear remembrances, whose presence
soothes 760

Or elevates the mind, intent to weigh

The good and evil of our mortal state.

To these emotions, whencesoe'er they
come,

Whether from breath of outward circum-
stance,

Or from the Soul — an impulse to her-
self — 765

I would give utterance in numerous verse.

Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love,
and Hope,

And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;

Of blessed consolation in distress;

Of moral strength, and intellectual
power; 770

Of joy in widest commonalty spread;

Of the individual mind that keeps her own
 Inviolat retirement, subject there
 To conscience only and the law supreme
 Of that Intelligence which governs
 all — 775

I sing:—"fit audience let me find though
 few!"

So prayed, more gaining than he asked,
 the Bard —

In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need
 Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
 Descend to earth or dwell in the highest
 heaven! 780

For I must tread on shadowy ground,
 must sink

Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in
 worlds

To which the heaven of heavens is but a
 veil.

All strength—all terror, single or in
 bands,

That ever was put forth in personal
 form — 785

Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
 Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal
 thrones —

I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
 The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
 Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped
 out 790

By help of dreams—can breed such fear
 and awe

As fall upon us often when we look
 Into our minds, into the Mind of Man—
 My haunt, and the main region of my
 song:

Beauty—a living Presence of the
 earth, 795

Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
 Which craft of delicate spirits hath com-
 posed

From earth's materials—waits upon my
 steps;

Pitches her tents before me as I move,
 An hourly neighbor. Paradise, and
 groves 800

Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of
 old

Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should
 they be

A history only of departed things,
 Or a mere fiction of what never was?
 For the discerning intellect of Man, 805
 When wedded to this goodly universe
 In love and holy passion, shall find these
 A simple produce of the common day.

I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
 Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal
 verse 810

Of this great consummation: and, by
 words

Which speak of nothing more than what
 we are,

Would I arouse the sensual from their
 sleep

Of Death, and win the vacant and the
 vain

To noble raptures; while my voice pro-
 claims 815

How exquisitely the individual mind
 (And the progressive powers perhaps no
 less

Of the whole species) to the external
 world

Is fitted; and how exquisitely, too—
 Theme this but little heard of among
 men — 820

The external world is fitted to the mind;
 And the creation (by no lower name
 Can it be called) which they with blended
 might

Accomplish:—this is our high argument.

Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I
 oft 825

Must turn elsewhere,—to travel near the
 tribes

And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
 Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
 Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
 Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang 830
Brooding above the fierce confederate
storm

Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—may these
sounds

Have their authentic comment; that even
these
Hearing, I be not downcast or for-
lorn! — 835

Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come; and dost
possess

A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets; upon me bestow 840
A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may
shine,

Shedding benignant influence, and secure
Itself from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their
sway 845

Throughout the nether sphere! — And if
with this

I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the mind and man
Contemplating, and who and what he
was —

The transitory being that beheld 850
This Vision — when and where and how
he lived;

Be not this labor useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then, dread
Power!

Whose gracious favor is the primal source
Of all illumination, may my life 855
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners:
nurse

My heart in genuine freedom — all pure
thoughts

Be with me — so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the
end! 860

When she I loved looked every day, 5
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea; 10
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard plot;
And as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot 15
Came near and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon. 20

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thought will
slide 25

Into a lover's head! —
"Oh, mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove, 30
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half-hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one 35
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me! 40

THE LUCY POEMS

(1799)

Strange fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

I travelled among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream! 45
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire; 50
 And she I cherished turned her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
 The bowers where Lucy played;
 And thine too is the last green field 55
 That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
 Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
 On earth was never sown;
 This child I to myself will take, 60
 She shall be mine, and I will make
 A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
 Both law and impulse: and with me
 The girl, in rock and plain, 65
 In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
 Shall feel an overseeing power
 To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
 That wild with glee across the lawn 70
 Or up the mountain springs;
 And hers shall be the breathing balm,
 And hers the silence and the calm
 Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall
 lend 75
 To her; for her the willow bend;
 Nor shall she fail to see
 Even in the motions of the storm
 Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
 By silent sympathy. 80

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
 To her; and she shall lean her ear
 In many a secret place
 Where rivulets dance their wayward
 round,
 And beauty born of murmuring sound 85
 Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
 Shall rear her form to stately height,
 Her virgin bosom swell;
 Such thoughts to Lucy I will give 90
 While she and I together live
 Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was
 done—
 How soon my Lucy's race was run!
 She died, and left to me 95
 This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
 The memory of what has been,
 And never more will be.

A slumber did my spirit seal;
 I had no human fears: 100
 She seemed a thing that could not feel
 The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
 She neither hears nor sees;
 Rolled round in earth's diurnal course, 105
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.

LUCY GRAY

OR, SOLITUDE
 (1799)

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
 And, when I crossed the wild,
 I chanced to see at break of day
 The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew; 5
 She dwelt on a wide moor,
 —The sweetest thing that ever grew
 Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
 The hare upon the green; 10
 But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
 Will never more be seen.

"Tonight will be a stormy night—
 You to the town must go;
 And take a lantern, Child, to light 15
 Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon —
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!" 20

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a fagot band;
He plied his work; — and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe: 25
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down; 30
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight 35
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on the hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door. 40

They wept — and, turning homeward,
cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet";
— When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's
edge 45

They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same; 50
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank; 55
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild. 60

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

(1800)

If from the public way you turn your
steps

Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead
Ghyll,

You will suppose that with an upright
path

Your feet must struggle; in such bold as-
cent

The pastoral mountains front you, face to
face, 5

But, courage! for around that boisterous
brook

The mountains have all opened out them-
selves,

And made a hidden valley of their own.

No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones,
and kites 11

That overhead are sailing in the sky.

It is in truth an utter solitude;

Nor should I have made mention of this
dell

But for one object which you might pass
by, 15

Might see and notice not. Beside the
brook

Appears a straggling heap of unhewn
stones!

And to that simple object appertains

A story — unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20

Or for the summer shade. It was the
first

Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and
hills 25

Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the
power

Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30
For passions that were not my own, and
think

(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human
life.

Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the
same 35

For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere
Vale 40

There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his
name;

An old man, stout of heart, and strong of
limb.

His bodily frame had been from youth to
age

Of an unusual strength: his mind was
keen,

Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs, 45
And in his shepherd's calling he was
prompt

And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all
winds,

Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the
South 50

Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.

The shepherd, at such warning, of his
flock

Bethought him, and he to himself would
say,

"The winds are now devising work for
me!" 55

And, truly, at all times, the storm, that
drives

The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone

Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the
heights. 60

So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should
suppose

That the green valleys, and the streams
and rocks,

Were things indifferent to the shepherd's
thoughts.

Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had
breathed 65

The common air; hills, which with vigor-
ous step

He had so often climbed; which had im-
pressed

So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the
memory 70

Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain;

Those fields, those hills—what could they
less? had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to
him 75

A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in single-
ness.

His helpmate was a comely matron, old —
Though younger than himself full twenty
years 80

She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels
she had

Of antique form; this large, for spinning
wool;

That small, for flax; and if one wheel
had rest

It was because the other was at work. 85

The pair had but one inmate in their house,

An only child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began

To deem that he was old — in shepherd's phrase,

With one foot in the grave. This only son, 90

With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,

The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,

That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone, 95

And from their occupations out of doors
The son and father were come home, even then,

Their labor did not cease; unless when all

Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,

Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk, 100

Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,

And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)

And his old father both betook themselves

To such convenient work as might employ 105

Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card

Wool for the housewife's spindle, or repair

Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge, 110

That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed

Large space beneath, as duly as the light

Of day grew dim the housewife hung a lamp;

An aged utensil, which had performed 115
Service beyond all others of its kind.

Early at evening did it burn — and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,

And left, the couple neither gay perhaps 120

Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,

Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,

There by the light of this old lamp they sate,

Father and son, while far into the night 125

The housewife plied her own peculiar work,

Making the cottage through the silent hours

Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.

This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life 130

That thrifty pair had lived. For, as it chanced,

Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,

High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake; 135

And from this constant light, so regular

And so far seen, the house itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,

Both old and young, was named THE
EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years, 140

The shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs

Have loved his helpmate; but to Michael's heart

This son of his old age was yet more dear —

Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood
of all— 145

Than that a child, more than all other
gifts

That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking
thoughts,

And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For often-
times

Old Michael, while he was a babe in
arms,

Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use 155
Of fathers, but with patient mind en-
forced

To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael
love, 160

Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the young-one in his sight, when
he

Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's
stool

Sate with a fettered sheep before him
stretched

Under the large old oak, that near his
door 165

Stood single, and, from matchless depth of
shade,

Chosen for the shearer's covert from the
sun,

Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet
it bears.

There, while they two were sitting in the
shade, 170

With others round them, earnest all and
blithe,

Would Michael exercise his heart with
looks

Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep

By catching at their legs, or with his
shouts 175

Scared them, while they lay still beneath
the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the
boy grew up

A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;

Then Michael from a winter coppice
cut 180

With his own hand a sapling, which he
hooped

With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,

And gave it to the boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was

placed 185

At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,

There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a
help;

And for this cause not always, I believe, 190
Receiving from his father hire of praise;

Though nought was left undone which
staff, or voice,

Or looks, or threatening gestures, could
perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old,
could stand

Against the mountain blasts; and to the
heights, 195

Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his father daily went, and they

Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the shepherd loved

before
Were dearer now? that from the boy there

came 200

Feelings and emanations—things which
were

Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old man's heart seemed born
again?

Thus in his father's sight the boy grew
up!

And now, when he had reached his eight-
 eenth year, 205
 He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household
 lived
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there
 came

Distressful tidings. Long before the time
 Of which I speak, the shepherd had been
 bound 210

In surety for his brother's son, a man
 Of an industrious life, and ample means;
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had prest upon him; and old Michael
 now

Was summoned to discharge the forfeit-
 ure, 215

A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance. This unlooked-
 for claim,

At the first hearing, for a moment took
 More hope out of his life than he supposed
 That any old man ever could have lost. 220
 As soon as he had armed himself with
 strength

To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
 The shepherd's sole resource to sell at
 once

A portion of his patrimonial fields.
 Such was his first resolve; he thought
 again, 225

And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said
 he,

Two evenings after he had heard the news,
 "I have been toiling more than seventy
 years,

And in the open sunshine of God's love
 Have we all lived; yet if these fields of
 ours 230

Should pass into a stranger's hand, I
 think

That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
 And I have lived to be a fool at last 235
 To my own family. An evil man
 That was, and made an evil choice, if he
 Were false to us; and if he were not false,

There are ten thousand to whom loss
 like this

Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—
 but 240

'Twere better to be dumb than to talk
 thus.

"When I began, my purpose was to
 speak

Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.

Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be
 free; 245

He shall possess it, free as is the wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou
 know'st,

Another kinsman—he will be our friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
 Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall
 go, 250

And with his kinsman's help and his own
 thrift

He quickly will repair this loss, and then
 He may return to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done? Where every one is
 poor,

What can be gained?"

At this the old man paused, 255

And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into past times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to
 herself,

He was a parish-boy—at the church-
 door

They made a gathering for him, shillings,
 pence 260

And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors
 bought

A basket, which they filled with pedlar's
 wares;

And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
 Went up to London, found a master
 there,

Who, out of many, chose the trusty
 boy 265

To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous
 rich,

And left estates and monies to the poor.
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel,
floored

With marble which he sent from foreign
lands. 270

These thoughts, and many others of like
sort,

Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old man
was glad,

And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this
scheme

These two days has been meat and drink
to me. 275

Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good
hope.

—Make ready Luke's best garments, of
the best

Buy for him more, and let us send him
forth 280

Tomorrow, or the next day, or tonight:

—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-
night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields
went forth

With a light heart. The housewife for
five days

Was restless morn and night, and all day
long 285

Wrought on with her best fingers to pre-
pare

Things needful for the journey of her
son.

But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she
lay

By Michael's side, she through the last
two nights 290

Heard him, how he was troubled in his
sleep:

And when they rose at morning she could
see

That all his hopes were gone. That day
at noon

She said to Luke, while they two by them-
selves

Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not
go: 295

We have no other child but thee to lose—
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy father he will
die."

The youth made answer with a jocund
voice;

And Isabel, when she had told her
fears, 300

Recovered heart. That evening her best
fare

Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas
fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her
work;

And all the ensuing week the house ap-
peared 305

As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at
length

The expected letter from their kinsman
came,

With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the boy;
To which, requests were added, that forth-
with 310

He might be sent to him. Ten times or
more

The letter was read over; Isabel

Went forth to show it to the neighbors
round;

Nor was there at that time on English
land

A prouder heart than Luke's. When
Isabel 315

Had to her house returned, the old man
said,

"He shall depart tomorrow." To his
word

The housewife answered, talking much of
things

Which, if at such short notice he should
go,

Would surely be forgotten. But at
length 320

She gave consent, and Michael was at
ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed
 To build a sheepfold; and, before he heard
 The tidings of his melancholy loss, 325
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's
 edge
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he
 walked:
 And soon as they had reached the place he
 stopped, 330
 And thus the old man spake to him:—
 "My son,
 Tomorrow thou wilt leave me: with full
 heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy. 335
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should
 touch
 On things thou canst not know of. —
 After thou
 First cam'st into the world — as oft be-
 falls 340
 To new-born infants — thou didst sleep
 away
 Two days, and blessings from thy father's
 tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed
 on,
 And still I loved thee with increasing love.
 Never to living ear came sweeter
 sounds 345
 Than when I heard thee by our own fire-
 side
 First uttering, without words, a natural
 tune;
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy
 joy
 Sing at thy mother's breast. Month fol-
 lowed month,
 And in the open fields my life was
 passed 350
 And on the mountains; else I think that
 thou

Hadst been brought up upon thy father's
 knees.
 But we were playmates, Luke: among
 these hills,
 As well thou knowest, in us the old and
 young
 Have played together, nor with me didst
 thou 355
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these
 words
 He sobbed aloud. The old man grasped
 his hand,
 And said, "Nay, do not take it so — I see
 That these are things of which I need not
 speak. 360
 — Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good father: and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others' hands; for, though now
 old
 Beyond the common life of man, I still 365
 Remember them who loved me in my
 youth.
 Both of them sleep together: here they
 lived,
 As all their forefathers had done; and
 when
 At length their time was come, they were
 not loth
 To give their bodies to the family
 mould. 370
 I wished that thou should'st live the life
 they lived:
 But, 'tis a long time to look back, my son,
 And see so little gain from threescore
 years.
 These fields were burthened when they
 came to me;
 Till I was forty years of age, not
 more 375
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my
 work,
 And till these three weeks past the land
 was free.
 — It looks as if it never could endure
 Another master. Heaven forgive me,
 Luke, 380

If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go."

At this the old man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which
they stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my
son, 385

It is a work for me. But, lay one stone —
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own
hands.

Nay, boy, be of good hope; — we both
may live

To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale; — do thou thy
part; 390

I will do mine. — I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to
thee:

Up to the heights, and in among the
storms,

Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do
alone, 395

Before I knew thy face. — Heaven bless
thee, boy!

Thy heart these two weeks has been beat-
ing fast

With many hopes; it should be so — yes
— yes —

I knew that thou could'st never have a
wish

To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound
to me 400

Only by links of love: when thou art
gone,

What will be left to us! — But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil
men 405

Be thy companions, think of me, my son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy
thoughts,

And God will strengthen thee: amid all
fear

And all temptation, Luke, I pray that
thou

May'st bear in mind the life thy fathers
lived, 410

Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare
thee well —

When thou return'st, thou in this place
wilt see

A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever
fate 415

Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the
grave."

The shepherd ended here; and Luke
stooped down,

And, as his father had requested, laid
The first stone of the sheepfold. At the
sight 420

The old man's grief broke from him; to
his heart

He pressed his son, he kissed him and
wept;

And to the house together they returned.
— Hushed was that house in peace, or
seeming peace,

Ere the night fell: — with morrow's dawn
the boy 425

Began his journey, and when he had
reached

The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their
doors,

Came forth with wishes and with farewell
prayers,

That followed him till he was out of
sight. 430

A good report did from their kinsman
come,

Of Luke and his well-doing: and the boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous
news,

Which, as the housewife phrased it, were
throughout

"The prettiest letters that were ever
seen." 435

Both parents read them with rejoicing
hearts.

So, many months passed on: and once
again

The shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and
now

Sometimes when he could find a leisure
hour 440

He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the sheepfold. Meantime.

Luke began

To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame 445
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of
love;

'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the
heart: 450

I have conversed with more than one who
well

Remember the old man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to
age

Of an unusual strength. Among the
rocks 455

He went, and still looked up to sun and
cloud,

And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to
time 460

Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old man — and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither
went, 465

And never lifed up a single stone.

There, by the sheepfold, sometimes was
he seen

Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time
to time, 470

He at the building of this sheepfold
wrought,

And left the work unfinished when he
died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband: at her death the
estate

Was sold, and went into a stranger's
hand. 475

The cottage which was named the EVE-
NING STAR

Is gone — the ploughshare has been
through the ground

On which it stood; great changes have
been wrought

In all the neighborhood: — yet the oak is
left

That grew beside their door; and the re-
mains 480

Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead
Ghyll.

RESOLUTION AND INDE- PENDENCE

(1802)

I

There was a roaring in the wind all
night;

The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;

The birds are singing in the distant
woods;

Over his own sweet voice the stock-dove
broods; 5

The jay makes answer as the magpie
chatters;

And all the air is filled with pleasant
noise of waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of
doors;

The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops; — on
the moors 10

The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy
earth

Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she
doth run.

III

I was a traveller then upon the moor, 15
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters
roar;

Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart em-
ploy:

My old remembrances went from me
wholly; 20

And all the ways of men, so vain and mel-
ancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the
might

Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low; 25
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me
came;

Dim sadness — and blind thoughts, I knew
not, nor could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare: 30
Even such a happy child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I
fare;

Far from the world I walk, and from all
care;

But there may come another day to me —
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and pov-
erty. 35

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant
thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come un-
sought

To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can he expect that others
should 40

Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no
heed at all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous
boy,

The sleepless soul that perished in his
pride;

Of him who walked in glory and in joy 45
Following his plough, along the moun-
tain-side:

By our own spirits are we deified:
We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency
and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace, 50
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had
striven,

Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a man before me unawares: 55
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore
grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come,
and whence; 60

So that it seems a thing endued with
sense:

Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a
shelf

Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun
itself;

X

Such seemed this man, not all alive nor
dead,
Nor all asleep — in his extreme old
age: 65

His body was bent double, feet and head
 Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
 As if some dire constraint of pain, or
 rage
 Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
 A more than human weight upon his frame
 had cast. 70

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale
 face,
 Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
 And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
 Upon the margin of that moorish flood
 Motionless as a cloud the old man
 stood, 75
 That heareth not the loud winds when
 they call
 And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
 Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
 Upon the muddy water, which he coned,
 As if he had been reading in a book: 81
 And now a stranger's privilege I took;
 And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
 "This morning gives us promise of a
 glorious day."

XIII

A gentle answer did the old man make, 85
 In courteous speech which forth he slowly
 drew:
 And with him further words I thus be-
 spake,
 "What occupation do you there pursue?
 This is a lonesome place for one like
 you."
 Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise 90
 Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid
 eyes.

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble
 chest,
 But each in solemn order followed each,
 With something of a lofty utterance
 drest—

Choice word and measured phrase, above
 the reach 95

Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
 Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
 Religious men, who give to God and man
 their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
 To gather leeches, being old and poor: 100
 Employment hazardous and wearisome!
 And he had many hardships to endure:
 From pond to pond he roamed, from moor
 to moor;
 Housing, with God's good help, by choice
 or chance,
 And in this way he gained an honest main-
 tenance. 105

XVI

The old man still stood talking by my
 side;
 But now his voice to me was like a
 stream
 Scarce heard; nor word from word could
 I divide;
 And the whole body of the man did seem
 Like one whom I had met with in a
 dream; 110
 Or like a man from some far region sent,
 To give me human strength, by apt admon-
 ishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear
 that kills;
 And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
 Cold, pain, and labor, and all fleshly
 ills; 115
 And mighty poets in their misery dead.
 —Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
 My question eagerly did I renew,
 "How is it that you live, and what is it
 you do?"

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words re-
 peat; 120
 And said, that, gathering leeches, far and
 wide
 He travelled; stirring thus about his feet

The waters of the pools where they abide.
 "Once I could meet with them on every
 side;
 But they have dwindled long by slow de-
 cay; 125
 Yet still I persevere, and find them where
 I may."

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely
 place,
 The old man's shape, and speech — all
 troubled me:
 In my mind's eye I seemed to see him
 pace
 About the weary moors continually, 130
 Wandering about alone and silently.
 While I these thoughts within myself pur-
 sued,
 He, having made a pause, the same dis-
 course renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter
 blended,
 Cheerfully uttered, with demeanor
 kind, 135
 But stately in the main; and when he
 ended,
 I could have laughed myself to scorn to
 find
 In that decrepit man so firm a mind.
 "God," said I, "be my help and stay se-
 cure;
 I'll think of the leech-gatherer on the
 lonely moor!" 140

MY HEART LEAPS UP

(1802)

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old, 5
Or let me die!
 The Child is father of the Man;
 And I could wish my days to be
 Bound each to each by natural piety.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMIN-
STER BRIDGE

September 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more
fair:
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass
 by
 A sight so touching in its majesty:
 This city now doth, like a garment, wear
 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare, 5
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres and tem-
 ples lie
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
 All bright and glittering in the smoke-
 less air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendor, valley, rock, or
 hill; 10
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
 The river glideth at his own sweet will:
 Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
 And all that mighty heart is lying still!

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING

(1802)

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
 The holy time is quiet as a nun
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
 The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the
 sea: 5
 Listen! the mighty being is awake,
 And doth with his eternal motion make
 A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
 Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with
 me here,
 If thou appear untouched by solemn
 thought, 10
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the
 year;
 And worship'st at the temple's inner
 shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it
 not.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE
VENETIAN REPUBLIC

(1802)

Once did she hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the
worth

Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty.

She was a maiden city, bright and free; 5
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And when she took unto herself a mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories
fade,

Those titles vanish, and that strength
decay; 10

Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final
day:

Men are we, and must grieve when even
the shade

Of that which once was great, is passed
away.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

(1802)

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling rustic tend his
plough

Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless
den;—

O miserable chieftain! where and when 5
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not;
do thou

Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful
brow:

Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left
behind

Powers that will work for thee: air,
earth, and skies; 10

There's not a breathing of the common
wind

That will forget thee; thou hast great
allies:

Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

WRITTEN IN LONDON

SEPTEMBER, 1802

○ Friend! I know not which way I must
look

For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of crafts-
man, cook,

Or groom!—We must run glittering like
a brook 5

In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore: 10
Plain living and high thinking are no

more:

The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful inno-
cence,

And pure religion breathing household
laws.

LONDON, 1802 (*To Milton*)

(1802)

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this
hour:

England hath need of thee; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and
pen,

Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and
bower,

Have forfeited their ancient English
dower 5

Of inward happiness. We are selfish
men;

Oh! raise us up, return to us again;

And give us manners, virtue, freedom,
power.

Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was
like the sea: 10

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic,
 free,
 So didst thou travel on life's common
 way,
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF

(1802)

It is not to be thought of that the flood
 Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
 Of the world's praise, from dark anti-
 quity
 Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, un-
 withstood,"
 Roused though it be full often to a mood
 Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
 That this most famous stream in bogs
 and sands
 Should perish; and to evil and to good
 Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
 Armory of the invincible knights of old: 10
 We must be free or die, who speak the
 tongue
 That Shakespeare spake; the faith and
 morals hold
 Which Milton held.—In everything we
 are sprung
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles mani-
 fold.

TO THE DAISY

(1802)

With little here to do or see
 Of things that in the great world be,
 Daisy! again I talk to thee,
 For thou art worthy,
 Thou unassuming commonplace 5
 Of Nature, with that homely face,
 And yet with something of a grace,
 Which love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
 I sit, and play with similes, 10
 Loose types of things through all de-
 grees,
 Thoughts of thy raising:

And many a fond and idle name
 I give to thee, for praise or blame,
 As is the humor of the game, 15
 While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port;
 Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
 In thy simplicity the sport
 Of all temptations; 20
 A queen in crown of rubies drest;
 A starveling in a scanty vest;
 Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
 Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye 25
 Staring to threaten and defy,
 That thought comes next—and instantly
 The freak is over,
 The shape will vanish—and behold
 A silver shield with boss of gold, 30
 That spreads itself, some faery bold
 In fight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar—
 And then thou art a pretty star;
 Not quite so fair as many are 35
 In heaven above thee!
 Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
 Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
 May peace come never to his nest,
 Who shall reprove thee! 40

Bright *Flower!* for by that name at last,
 When all my reveries are past,
 I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
 Sweet silent creature!
 That breath'st with me in sun and air, 45
 Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
 My heart with gladness, and a share
 Of thy meek nature!

TO THE DAISY

(1802)

Bright *Flower!* whose home is every-
 where,
 Bold in maternal Nature's care,
 And, all the long year through, the heir
 Of joy or sorrow;

Methinks that there abides in thee 5
 Some concord with humanity,
 Given to no other flower I see
 The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon deprest?
 A thoughtless thing! who, once unblest, 10
 Does little on his memory rest,
 Or on his reason,
 And thou wouldst teach him how to find
 A shelter under every wind,
 A hope for times that are unkind 15
 And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
 Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
 With friends to greet thee, or without,
 Yet pleased and willing; 20
 Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
 And all things suffering from all,
 Thy function apostolical
 In peace fulfilling.

THE GREEN LINNET

(1803)

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
 Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
 With brightest sunshine round me spread
 Of spring's unclouded weather,
 In this sequestered nook how sweet 5
 To sit upon my orchard-seat!
 And birds and flowers once more to greet,
 My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
 In all this covert of the blest: 10
 Hail to thee, far above the rest
 In joy of voice and pinion!
 Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
 Presiding spirit here today,
 Dost lead the revels of the May; 15
 And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
 Make all one band of paramours,
 Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment: 20

A life, a presence like the air,
 Scattering thy gladness without care,
 Too blest with any one to pair;
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees, 25
 That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
 Behold him perched in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover;
 There! where the flutter of his wings
 Upon his back and body flings 30
 Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
 A brother of the dancing leaves;
 Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves 35
 Pours forth his song in gushes;
 As if by that exulting strain
 He mocked and treated with disdain
 The voiceless form he chose to feign,
 While fluttering in the bushes. 40

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

AT INVERSNYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND

(1803)

Sweet Highland Girl, a very shower
 Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
 Twice seven consenting years have shed
 Their utmost bounty on thy head:
 And these grey rocks; that household 5
 lawn;
 Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
 This fall of water that doth make
 A murmur near the silent lake;
 This little bay; a quiet road
 That holds in shelter thy abode — 10
 In truth together do ye seem
 Like something fashioned in a dream;
 Such forms as from their covert peep
 When earthly cares are laid asleep!
 But, O fair creature! in the light 15
 Of common day, so heavenly bright,
 I bless thee, vision as thou art
 I bless thee with a human heart;
 God shield thee to thy latest years!
 Thee neither know I, nor thy peers; 20
 And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
 For thee when I am far away:
 For never saw I mien, or face,
 In which more plainly I could trace 25
 Benignity and home-bred sense
 Ripening in perfect innocence.
 Here scattered, like a random seed,
 Remote from men, thou dost not need
 The embarrassed look of shy distress, 30
 And maidenly shamefacedness:
 Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
 The freedom of a mountaineer:
 A face with gladness overspread!
 Soft smiles, by human kindness bred! 35
 And seemliness complete, that sways
 Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
 With no restraint, but such as springs
 From quick and eager visitings
 Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach 40
 Of thy few words of English speech:
 A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
 That gives thy gestures grace and life!
 So have I, not unmoved in mind,
 Seen birds of tempest-loving kind — 45
 Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
 For thee who art so beautiful?
 O happy pleasure! here to dwell
 Beside thee in some heathy dell; 50
 Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
 A shepherd, thou a shepherdess!
 But I could frame a wish for thee
 More like a grave reality:
 Thou art to me but as a wave 55
 Of the wild sea; and I would have
 Some claim upon thee, if I could,
 Though but of common neighborhood.
 What joy to hear thee, and to see!
 Thy elder brother I would be, 60
 Thy father—anything to thee!
 Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
 Hath led me to this lonely place.
 Joy have I had; and going hence
 I bear away my recompense. 65
 In spots like these it is we prize
 Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
 Then, why should I be loth to stir?
 I feel this place was made for her;

To give new pleasure like the past, 70
 Continued long as life shall last.
 Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
 Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part:
 For I, methinks, till I grow old,
 As fair before me shall behold, 75
 As I do now, the cabin small,
 The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
 And thee, the spirit of them all!

THE SOLITARY REAPER

(1803)

Behold her, single in the field,
 Yon solitary Highland lass!
 Reaping and singing by herself;
 Stop here, or gently pass!
 Alone she cuts and binds the grain, 5
 And sings a melancholy strain;
 O listen! for the vale profound
 Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chant
 More welcome notes to weary bands 10
 Of travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas 15
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? —
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
 For old, unhappy, far-off things,
 And battles long ago: 20
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
 Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
 That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang 25
 As if her song could have no ending;
 I saw her singing at her work,
 And o'er the sickle bending; —
 I listened, motionless and still;
 And, as I mounted up the hill, 36
 The music in my heart I bore,
 Long after it was heard no more.

TO THE CUCKOO

(1804)

O blithe new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

While I am lying on the grass 5
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers, 10
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing, 15
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to: that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky. 20

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet; 25
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be 30
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for thee!

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

(1804)

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition sent
To be a moment's ornament;

Her eyes as stars of twilight fair; 5
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay. 10

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet 15
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and 20
smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will, 25
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light. 30

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

(1804)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay: 10
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
 Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
 A poet could not but be gay, 15
 In such a jocund company:
 I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodils.

ODE TO DUTY

(1805)

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
 O Duty! if that name thou love
 Who art a light to guide, a rod
 To check the erring, and reprove;
 Thou, who art victory and law 5
 When empty terrors overawe;
 From vain temptations dost set free;
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail hu-
 manity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
 Be on them; who, in love and truth, 10
 Where no misgiving is, rely
 Upon the genial sense of youth:
 Glad hearts! without reproach or blot
 Who do thy work, and know it not:
 Oh! if through confidence misplaced 15
 They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power!
 around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
 And happy will our nature be,
 When love is an unerring light,
 And joy its own security. 20
 And they a blissful course may hold
 Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
 Live in the spirit of this creed;
 Yet seek thy firm support, according to
 their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried; 25
No sport of every random gust,

Yet being to myself a guide,
 Too blindly have reposed my trust:
 And oft, when in my heart was heard
 Thy timely mandate, I deferred 30
 The task, in smoother walks to stray;
 But thee I now would serve more strictly,
 if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
 Or strong compunction in me wrought,
 I supplicate for thy control; 35
 But in the quietness of thought:
 Me this unchartered freedom tires;
 I feel the weight of chance-desires:
 My hopes no more must change their
 name,
 I long for a repose that ever is the
 same. 40

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace;
 Nor know we anything so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face:
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds 45
 And fragrance in thy footing treads;
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through
Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
 I call thee: I myself commend 50
 Unto thy guidance from this hour;
 Oh, let my weakness have an end!
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice;
 The confidence of reason give; 55
 And in the light of truth thy bondman let
 me live!

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE
 IN A STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE
 BEAUMONT
 (1805)

I was thy neighbor once, thou rugged Pile!
 Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of
 thee:
 I saw thee every day; and all the while
 Thy form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air; 5
 So like, so very like, was day to day!
 When'er I looked, thy image still was
 there;
 It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no
 sleep;
 No mood which season takes away or
 brings: 10
 I could have fancied that the mighty
 Deep
 Was even the gentlest of all gentle things.

Ah! then, if mine had been the painter's
 hand,
 To express what then I saw; and add the
 gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or
land, 15
The consecration and the poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary
 Pile!
 Amid a world how different from this!
 Beside a sea that could not cease to
 smile;
 On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss, 20

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-
 house divine
 Of peaceful years; a chronicle of
 heaven;—
 Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
 The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A picture had it been of lasting ease, 25
 Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
 No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
 Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
 Such picture would I at that time have
 made: 30
 And seen the soul of truth in every part;
 A steadfast peace that might not be be-
 trayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no
 more;

I have submitted to a new control:
 A power is gone, which nothing can re-
 store; 35
A deep distress hath humanized my soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
 A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
 The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
 This, which I know, I speak with mind
 serene. 40

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have
 been the friend,
 If he had lived, of him whom I deplore,
 This work of thine I blame not, but com-
 mend;
 This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh, 'tis a passionate work!—yet wise
 and well, 45
 Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
 That hulk which labors in the deadly
 swell,
 This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge castle, standing here sub-
 lime,
 I love to see the look with which it
 braves, 50
Cased in the unfeeling armor of old time,
 The lightning, the fierce wind, and tramp-
 ling waves.

Farewell, farewell, the heart that lives
 alone,
 Housed in a dream, at distance from the
 Kind!
 Such happiness, wherever it be known, 55
 Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
 And frequent sights of what is to be
 borne!
 Such sights, or worse, as are before me
 here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we
mourn. 60

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY
FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD.

(1803-06)

"The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

I

There was a time when meadow, grove,
and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream. 5
It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can
see no more.

II

The rainbow comes and goes, 10
And lovely is the rose,
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are
bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair; 15
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from
the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous
song,
And while the young lambs bound 20
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of
grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:

The cataracts blow their trumpets from
the steep; 25
No more shall grief of mine the season
wrong;
I hear the echoes through the mountains
throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of
sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea 30
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday; —
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,
thou happy shepherd-boy! 35

IV

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the
call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your
jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal, 40
The fulness of your bliss, I feel — I feel it
all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the children are culling 45
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines
warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's
arm: —
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear! 50
— But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have looked
upon,
Both of them speak of something that is
gone:
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat: 55
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now the glory and the
dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home: 65
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But he beholds the light, and whence it
 flows,
 He sees it in his joy; 70
 The Youth, who daily farthest from the
 east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away, 75
 And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her
 own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural
 kind,
 And, even with something of a mother's
 mind,
 And no unworthy aim, 80
 The homely nurse doth all she can
 To make her foster-child, her inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born
 blisses, 85
 A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
 See, where mid work of his own hand he
 lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's
 eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or
 chart, 90

Some fragment from his dream of human
 life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart, 95
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside, 100
 And with new joy and pride
 The little actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous
 stage"
 With all the persons, down to palsied
 Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equi-
 page; 105
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth be-
 lie
 Thy soul's immensity;
 Thou best philosopher, who yet dost
 keep 110
 Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the Eternal
 Deep,
 Haunted for ever by the Eternal Mind, —
 Mighty prophet! seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest 115
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the
 grave;
 Thou, over whom thy immortality
 Broods like the Day, a master o'er a
 slave,
 A presence which is not to be put by; 120
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the
 might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's
 height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou
 provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,

Thus blindly with thy blessedness at
 strife? 125
 Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly
 freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live, 130
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!
 The thought of our past years in me
 doth breed
 Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be
 blest — 135
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in
 his breast: —
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise; 140
 But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised, 145
 High instincts before which our Mortal
 Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may, 150
 Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
 Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to
make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the Eternal Silence: truths that
 wake, 155
 To perish never;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad en-
 deavor,
 Nor man nor boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy! 160
 Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,

Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither, 165
 And see the children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling ever-
 more.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous
 song!
 And let the young lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound! 170
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts today
 Feel the gladness of the May!
 What though the radiance which was once
 so bright 175
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the
 hour
 Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the
 flower;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind; 180
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering;
 In the faith that looks through
death, 185
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and
 Groves,
 Forebode not any severing of our loves!
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your
 might;
 I only have relinquished one delight 190
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.
 I love the brooks which down their chan-
 nels fret,
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as
 they;
 The innocent brightness of a new-born day
 Is lovely yet; 195

The clouds that gather round the setting
sun

Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortal-
ity;

Another race hath been, and other palms
are won.

Thanks to the human heart by which we
live, 200

Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and
fears,

To me the meanest flower that blows can
give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for
tears.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

(1806)

Who is the happy warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to
be?

—It is the generous spirit, who, when
brought

Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish
thought: 5

Whose high endeavors are an inward
light

That makes the path before him always
bright:

Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent
to learn;

Abides by this resolve, and stops not
there, 10

But makes his moral being his prime
care;

Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;

In face of these doth exercise a power 15
Which is our human nature's highest
dower;

Controls them and subdues, transmutes,
bereaves

Of their bad influence, and their good
receives:

By objects, which might force the soul
to abate

Her feeling, rendered more compassion-
ate; 20

Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more
pure,

As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and dis-
tress; 25

Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who de-
pends

Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted
still

To evil for a guard against worse ill, 30
And what in quality or act is best

Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labors good on good to fix, and owes

To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of com-
mand, 35

Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,

And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the
same

Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim; 40
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in

wait

For wealth, or honors, or for worldly
state;

Whom they must follow; on whose head
must fall,

Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the
common strife, 45

Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;

But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven

has joined

Great issues, good or bad for human
kind, 50

Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man in-
spired;

And, through the heat of conflict, keeps
the law

In calmness made, and sees what he fore-
saw;

Or if an unexpected call succeed, 55

Come when it will, is equal to the need:

— He who, though thus endued as with
a sense

And faculty for storm and turbulence,

Is yet a soul whose master-bias leans

To homefelt pleasures and to gentle
scenes; 60

Sweet images! which, whereso'er he be,

Are at his heart; and such fidelity

It is his darling passion to approve;

More brave for this, that he hath much
to love:—

'Tis, finally, the man, who, lifted high, 65

Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,

Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—

Who, with a toward or untoward lot,

Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or
not—

Plays, in the many games of life, that
one 70

Where what he most doth value must
be won:

Whom neither shape of danger can dis-
may,

Nor thought of tender happiness betray;

Who, not content that former worth stand
fast,

Looks forward, persevering to the last, 75

From well to better, daily self-surpast:

Who, whether praise of him must walk
the earth

For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,

Or he must fall, to sleep without his
fame,

And leave a dead unprofitable name— 80

Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;

And, while the mortal mist is gathering,
draws

His breath in confidence of Heaven's ap-
plause:

This is the happy warrior; this is he

That every man in arms should wish to
be. 85

NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM

(1806)

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow
room;

And hermits are contented with their cells;

And students with their pensive citadels:

Maid at the wheel, the weaver at his
loom,

Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for
bloom, 5

High as the highest peak of Furness Fells,

Will murmur by the hour in foxglove
bells:

In truth, the prison unto which we doom

Ourselves no prison is: and hence for me,

In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be
bound 10

Within the sonnet's scanty plot of ground;

Pleased if some souls (for such there
needs must be)

Who have felt the weight of too much
liberty,

Should find brief solace there, as I have
found.

PERSONAL TALK

(1806)

I

I am not one who much or oft delight

To season my fireside with personal
talk,—

Of friends, who live within an easy
walk,

Or neighbors, daily, weekly, in my sight:

And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies
bright, 5

Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the
stalk,

These all wear out of me, like forms with
chalk

Painted on rich men's floors for one feast
night.

Better than such discourse doth silence
long,

Long, barren silence, square with my de-
sire; 10

To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
 In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
 And listen to the flapping of the flame,
 Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

II

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen
 and see, 15

And with a living pleasure we describe;
 And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
 The languid mind into activity.

Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and
 glee

Are fostered by the comment and the
 gibe." 20

Even be it so, yet still among your tribe,
 Our daily world's true worldlings, rank
 not me!

Children are blest, and powerful; their
 world lies

More justly balanced; partly at their
 feet,

And part far from them: sweetest mel-
odies 25

Are those that are by distance made more
 sweet;

Whose mind is but the mind of his own
 eyes,

He is a slave; the meanest we can meet!

III

Wings have we, — and as far as we can
 go

We may find pleasure: wilderness and
 wood, 30

Blank ocean and mere sky, support that
 mood

Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
 Dreams, books, are each a world; and

books, we know,

Are a substantial world, both pure and
 good:

Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh
 and blood, 35

Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
 There find I personal themes, a plenteous

store,
 Matter wherein right voluble I am,

To which I listen with a ready ear;
 Two shall be named, preëminently
 dear, — 40

The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
 And heavenly Una with her milk-white
 lamb.

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
 Great gains are mine; for thus I live re-
 mote

From evil-speaking; rancor, never
 sought, 45

Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
 Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
 Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and
 joyous thought:

And thus from day to day my little boat
 Rocks in its harbor, lodging peaceably. 50
 Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler
cares —

The poets, who on earth have made us
 heirs

Of truth and pure delight by heavenly
 lays!

Oh! might my name be numbered among
 theirs, 55

Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

Sublime far from ordinary

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH
 WITH US

(1806)

The world is too much with us; late and
 soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our
 powers:

Little we see in Nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sor-
 did boon!

The Sea that bares her bosom to the
 moon; 5

The winds that will be howling at all
 hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping
 flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of
tune;

It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather
be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; 10
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would makè me less
forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the
sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd
horn.

TO SLEEP

(1806)

A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and
bees

Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and
seas,

Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and
pure sky;

I have thought of all by turns, and yet
do lie 5

Sleepless! and soon the small birds' mel-
odies

Must hear, first uttered from my orchard
trees;

And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights
more, I lay,

And could not win thee, Sleep! by any
stealth: 10

So do not let me wear tonight away:

Without thee what is all the morning's
wealth?

Come, blessed barrier between day and
day,

Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous
health!

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

(1807)

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty
voice:

In both from age to age thou didst re-
joice,

They were thy chosen music, Liberty!

There came a Tyrant, and with holy
glee 5

Thou fought'st against him; but hast
vainly striven:

Thou from thy Alpine holds at length
art driven,

Where not a torrent murmurs heard by
thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been
bereft:

Then cleave, O cleave to that which still
is left; 10

For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow
would it be

That mountain floods should thunder as
before,

And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by
thee?

HERE PAUSE: THE POET CLAIMS AT LEAST THIS PRAISE

(1811)

Here pause: the poet claims at least this
praise,

That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink
from hope

In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount *duty* that
Heaven lays, 5

For its own honor, on man's suffering
heart.

Never may from our souls one truth de-
part —

That an accursèd thing it is to gaze

On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled
eye;

Nor — touched with due abhorrence of
their guilt 10

For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood
is spilt,

And justice labors in extremity —

Forget *thy* weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!

NOVEMBER 1

(1815)

How clear, how keen, how marvellously
bright

The effluence from yon distant mountain's
head,

Which, strewn with snow smooth as the
sky can shed,

Shines like another sun — on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching

Night, 5

And all her twinkling stars. Who now
would tread,

If so he might, yon mountain's glittering
head —

Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,

Unswapt, unstained? Nor shall the aërial
Powers 10

Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,

Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with wel-

come flowers.

SURPRISED BY JOY

(c. 1815)

Surprised by joy—impatient as the wind
I turned to share the transport — Oh!
with whom

But thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?

Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my
mind — 5

But how could I forget thee? Through
what power,

Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind

To my most grievous loss? — That
thought's return

Was the worst pang that sorrow ever
bore, 10

Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was

no more;

That neither present time, nor years un-
born

Could to my sight that heavenly face
restore.

LAODAMIA

(1814)

"With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope in-
spired;

And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades
forlorn

Of night, my slaughtered lord have I
required:

Celestial pity I again implore; — 5
Restore him to my sight — great Jove,

restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love en-
dowed

With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts
her hands;

While, like the sun emerging from a
cloud,

Her countenance brightens — and her eye
expands; 10

Her bosom heaves and spreads, her statu-
ure grows;

And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived? — O
joy!

What doth she look on? — whom doth she
behold?

Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy? 15
His vital presence? his corporeal mould!

It is — if sense deceive her not — 'tis he?
And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake — and touched her
with his wand

That calms all fear: "Such grace hath
crowned thy prayer, 20

Laodamia! that at Jove's command

Thy husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours'
space;

Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her
 Lord to clasp; 25
 Again that consummation she essayed;
 But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
 As often as that eager grasp was made:
 The phantom parts—but parts to re-
 unite,
 And reassume his place before her
 sight. 30

“Protesilaus, lo! thy guide is gone!
 Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy
 voice:
 This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
 Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will
 rejoice.
 Not to appal me have the gods be-
 stowed 35
 This precious boon; and blest a sad
 abode.”

“Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
 His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I
 be,
 I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
 But in reward of thy fidelity. 40
 And something also did my worth ob-
 tain;
 For fearless virtue bringeth boundless
 gain.

“Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle fore-
 told
 That the first Greek who touched the
 Trojan strand
 Should die; but me the threat could not
 withhold; 45
 A generous cause a victim did demand;
 And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
 A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.”

“Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest,
 best!
 Thy matchless courage I bewail no
 more, 50
 Which then, when tens of thousands were
 depressed
 By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal
 shore;

Thou found'st — and I forgive thee — here
 thou art —
 A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

“But thou, though capable of sternest
 deed, 55
 Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
 And he whose power restores thee hath
 decreed
 Thou should'st elude the malice of the
 grave:
 Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as
 fair
 As when their breath enriched Thessa-
 lian air. 60

“No spectre greets me,—no vain shadow
 this;
 Come, blooming hero, place thee by my
 side!
 Give, on this well-known couch, one nup-
 tial kiss
 To me, this day, a second time thy
 bride!”
 Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious
 Parcæ threw 65
 Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

“This visage tells thee that my doom is
 past:
 Nor should the change be mourned, even
 if the joys
 Of sense were able to return as fast
 And surely as they vanish. Earth de-
 stroys 70
 Those raptures duly — Erebus disdains;
 Calm pleasures there abide — majestic
 pains.

“Be taught, O faithful consort, to con-
 trol
 Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
 The depth, and not the tumult, of the
 soul; 75
 A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
 Thy transports moderate; and meekly
 mourn
 When I depart, for brief is my so-
 journ —”

"Ah, wherefore? — Did not Hercules by
force

Wrest from the guardian Monster of the
tomb 80

Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal
bloom?

Medea's spells dispersed the weight of
years,

And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful
peers.

"The Gods to us are merciful — and
they 85

Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the
sway

Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favorite seat be feeble
woman's breast. 90

"But if thou goest, I follow — " "Peace!"
he said; —

She looked upon him and was calmed and
cheered;

The ghastly color from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, ap-
peared

Elysian beauty, melancholy grace, 95
Brought from a pensive though a happy
place.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and
pure;

No fears to beat away — no strife to
heal —

The past unsighed for, and the future
sure; 100

Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous — imaged
there

In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air, 105

And fields invested with purpureal
gleams;

Climes which the sun, who sheds the
brightest day

Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath
earned

That privilege by virtue. "Ill," said
he, 110

"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain
delight,

While tears were thy best pastime, day
and night;

"And while my youthful peers before my
eyes 115

(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enter-
prise

By martial sports, — or, seated in the
tent,

Chieftains and kings in council were de-
tained;

What time the fleet at Aulis lay en-
chained. 120

"The wished-for wind was given: — I
then revolved

The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should
be

The foremost prow in pressing to the
strand, — 125

Mine the first blood that tinged the Tro-
jan sand.

"Yet bitter, oft-times bitter was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved
wife!

On these too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal
life, — 130

The paths which we had trod — these
fountains, flowers,

My new-planned cities, and unfinished
towers.

"But should suspense permit the foe to
cry,

'Behold they tremble!—haughty their
array,

Yet of their number no one dares to
die?' 135

In soul I swept the indignity away:

Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty
thought,

In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And thou, though strong in love, art all
too weak

In reason, in self-government too slow; 140

I counsel thee by fortitude to seek

Our blest reunion in the shades below.

The invisible world with thee hath sym-
pathized;

Be thy affections raised and solemnized.

"Learn, by a mortal yearning, to as-
cend— 145

Seeking a higher object. Love was given,

Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that
end;

For this the passion to excess was
driven—

That self might be annulled: her bondage
prove

The fetters of a dream, opposed to
love."— 150

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reap-
pears!

Round the dear Shade she would have
clung—'tis vain:

The hours are past—too brief had they
been years;

And him no mortal effort can detain:

Swift, toward the realms that know not
earthly day, 155

He through the portal takes his silent
way,

And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse
she lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and re-
proved,

She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,

By the just Gods whom no weak pity
moved, 160

Was doomed to wear out her appointed
time,

Apart from happy ghosts, that gather
flowers

Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'er-
thrown 165

Are mourned by man, and not by man
alone,

As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was enter-
tained)

A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she
died; 170

And ever, when such stature they had
gained

That Ilium's walls were subject to their
view,

The trees' tall summits withered at the
sight:

A constant interchange of growth and
blight!

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOR AND BEAUTY

(1818)

I

Had this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment;

But 'tis endued with power to stay, 5
And sanctify one closing day,

That frail Mortality may see—

What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!

Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang, 10

While choirs of fervent angels sang

Their vespers in the grove;

Or, crowning, star-like, each some sov-
ereign height,

Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
 Strains suitable to both.—Such holy
 rite, 15
 Methinks, if audibly repeated now
 From hill or valley, could not move
 Sublimier transport, purer love,
 Than doth this silent spectacle—the
 gleam—
 The shadow—and the peace supreme! 20

II

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
 And solemn harmony pervades
 The hollow vale from steep to steep,
 And penetrates the glades.
 Far-distant images draw nigh, 25
 Called forth by wondrous potency
 Of beamy radiance, that imbues,
 Whate'er it strikes, with gem-like hues!
 In vision exquisitely clear,
 Herds range along the mountain side; 30
 And glistening antlers are descried;
 And gilded flocks appear.
 Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal
 Eve!
 But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
 Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe 35
 That this magnificence is wholly thine!
 —From worlds not quickened by the sun
 A portion of the gift is won;
 An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is
 spread
 On ground which British shepherds
 tread! 40

III

And, if there be whom broken ties
 Afflict, or injuries assail,
 Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
 Present a glorious scale,
 Climbing suffused with sunny air, 45
 To stop—no record hath told where!
 And tempting Fancy to ascend,
 And with immortal Spirits blend!
 —Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
 But, rooted here, I stand and gaze 50

On those bright steps that heavenward
 raise
 Their practicable way.
 Come forth, ye drooping old men, look
 abroad,
 And see to what fair countries ye are
 bound!
 And if some traveller, weary of his
 road, 55
 Hath slept since noontide on the grassy
 ground,
 Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
 And wake him with such gentle heed
 As may attune his soul to meet the dower
 Bestowed on this transcendent hour! 60

IV

Such hues from their celestial urn
 Were wont to stream before mine eye,
 Where'er it wandered in the morn
 Of blissful infancy.
 This glimpse of glory, why renewed? 65
 Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
 For, if a vestige of those gleams
 Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
 Dread Power! whom peace and calmness
 serve
 No less than Nature's threatening
 voice, 70
 If aught unworthy be my choice,
 From Thee if I would swerve;
 Oh, let thy grace remind me of the light
 Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
 Which, at this moment, on my waking
 sight 75
 Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
 My soul, though yet confined to earth,
 Rejoices in a second birth!
 —'Tis past, the visionary splendor fades;
 And night approaches with her shades. 80

TO A SKYLARK

(1825)

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
 Dost thou despise the earth where cares
 abound?
 Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and
 eye

Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
 Thy nest which thou canst drop into at
 will, 5
 Those quivering wings composed, that music
 still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
 A privacy of glorious light is thine;
 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a
 flood
 Of harmony, with instinct more divine; 10
Type of the wise who soar, but never
roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and
Home!

THERE IS A LITTLE UNPRE- TENDING RILL

(1820)

There is a little unpretending rill
 Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
 That ever among men or naiads sought
 Notice or name! — It quivers down the
 hill,
 Furrowing its shallow way with dubious
 will; 5
 Yet to my mind this scanty stream is
 brought
 Oftener than Ganges or the Nile; a
 thought
 Of private recollection sweet and still!
 Months perish with their moons; year
 treads on year!
 But, faithful Emma! thou with me canst
 say 10
 That, while ten thousand pleasures dis-
 appear,
 And flies their memory fast almost as
 they;
 The immortal spirit of one happy day
 Lingers beside that rill, in vision clear.

BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIÉGE

(1820)

What lovelier home could gentle Fancy
 choose?
 Is this the stream whose cities, heights,
 and plains,

War's favorite playground, are with crim-
 son stains
 Familiar, as the Morn with pearly
 dew?
 The Morn, that now, along the silver
 Meuse, 5
 Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the
 swains
 To tend their silent boats and ringing
 wains,
 Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit
 bestrews
 The ripening corn beneath it. As mine
 eyes
 Turn from the fortified and threatening
 hill, 10
 How sweet the prospect of yon watery
 glade,
 With its grey rocks clustering in pensive
 shade —
 That, shaped like old monastic turrets,
 rise
 From the smooth meadow-ground, serene
 and still.

AFTER-THOUGHT

(From The River Duddon, a series of
 sonnets, 1820: number xxxiv)

I thought of thee, my partner and my
 guide,
 As being past away. — Vain sympathies!
 For, backward, Duddon, as I cast my
 eyes,
 I see what was, and is, and will abide;
 Still glides the stream, and shall for ever
 glide; 5
The form remains, the function never
dies;
 While we, the brave, the mighty, and the
 wise,
 We men, who in our morn of youth de-
 fied
 The elements, must vanish; — be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands
have power 10

To live, and act, and serve the future
hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's
transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we
know.

MUTABILITY

(1821)

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not
fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not
with crime, 5
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms
that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty
rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and
plain
And is no more; drop like the tower
sublime 10
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even
sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent
air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE
CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

(1821)

Tax not the royal Saint with vain ex-
pense,
With ill-matched aims the architect who
planned —
Albeit laboring for a scanty band
Of white-robed scholars only — this im-
mense
And glorious work of fine intelligence! 5
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects
the lore

Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the
sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching
roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand
cells, 10
Where light and shade repose, where
music dwells
Lingering — and wandering on as loth to
die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness
yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

SCORN NOT THE SONNET

(1827)

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have
frowned,
Mindless of its just honors; with this
key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the
melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's
wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso
sound; 5
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante
crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from
Faeryland 10
To struggle through dark ways; and,
when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The thing became a trumpet; whence he
blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few!

THE TROSACHS

(1831)

There's not a nook within this solemn
Pass,
But were an apt confessional for one

Taught by his summer spent, his autumn
gone,
That life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art
which chase 5
That thought away, turn, and with watch-
ful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear
than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice
happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray 10
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught
lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

"THERE!" SAID A STRIPLING,
POINTING WITH MEET PRIDE

(1833)

"There!" said a stripling, pointing with
meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half
concealed,
"Is Mosgiel Farm; and that's the very
field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy."
Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while,
descried 5
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran
rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
Beneath "the random *bield* of clod or
stone"
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in
flower 10
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural
hour
Have passed away; less happy than the
one
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died
to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love.

MOST SWEET IT IS WITH UN-
UPLIFTED EYES

(1833)

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or
none,
While a fair region round the traveller
lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal
scene, 5
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that
day
Let us break off all commerce with the
Muse: 10
With Thought and Love companions of
our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her
dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

IF THIS GREAT WORLD OF JOY
AND PAIN

(1833)

If this great world of joy and pain
Revolve in one sure track;
If freedom, set, will rise again,
And virtue, flown, come back:
Woe to the purblind crew who fill 5
The heart with each day's care;
Nor gain, from past or future, skill
To bear, and to forbear!

NOT IN THE LUCID INTERVALS
OF LIFE

(1834)

Not in the lucid intervals of life
That come but as a curse to party-strife;
Not in some hour when Pleasure with a
sigh
Of languor puts his rosy garland by;
Not in the breathing-times of that poor
slave 5

Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon's
cave —

Is Nature felt, or can be; nor do words,
Which practised talent readily affords,
Prove that her hand has touched respon-
sive chords;

Nor has her gentle beauty power to
move 10

With genuine rapture and with fervent
love

The soul of Genius, if he dare to take
Life's rule from passion craved for pas-
sion's sake;

Untaught that meekness is the cherished
bent

Of all the truly great and all the inno-
cent. 15

But who is innocent? By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature! we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.

To all that Earth from pensive hearts is
stealing, 20

And Heaven is now to gladdened eyes re-
vealing,

Add every charm the Universe can show
Through every change its aspects under-
go —

Care may be respited, but not repealed;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded
field. 25

Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the
peace,

If He, through whom alone our conflicts
cease,

Our virtuous hopes without relapse ad-
vance,

Come not to speed the soul's deliverance;
To the distempered intellect refuse 30
His gracious help, or give what we abuse.

DESIRE WE PAST ILLUSIONS TO RECALL?

(1833)

Desire we past illusions to recall?
To reinstate wild Fancy, would we hide

Truths whose thick veil Science has drawn
aside?

No, — let this age, high as she may,
instal

In her esteem the thirst that wrought
man's fall, 5

The universe is infinitely wide;
And conquering Reason, if self-glorified,
Can nowhere move uncrossed by some new
wall

Or gulf of mystery, which thou alone,
Imaginative Faith! canst overleap, 10

In progress toward the fount of Love, —
the throne

Of Power whose ministers the records
keep

Of periods fixed, and laws established,
less

Flesh to exalt than prove its nothingness.

BLEST STATESMAN HE, WHOSE MIND'S UNSELFISH WILL

(1838)

Blest statesman he, whose mind's unselfish
will

Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts:
whose eye

Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not; nor the humbled skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill 5
With patient care. What tho' assaults
run high,

They daunt not him who holds his min-
istry,

Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil
Its duties; — prompt to move, but firm
to wait, —

Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely
found; 10

That, for the functions of an ancient
State —

Strong by her charters, free because im-
bound,

Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate —
Perilous is sweeping change, all chance
unsound.

Taught by his summer spent, his autumn
gone,
That life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art
which chase 5
That thought away, turn, and with watch-
ful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear
than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice
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The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught
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Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

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Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy."
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To bear, and to forbear!

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That come but as a curse to party-strife;
Not in some hour when Pleasure with a
sigh
Of languor puts his rosy garland by;
Not in the breathing-times of that poor
slave 5

The bride hath paced into the hall,
 Red as a rose is she;
 Nodding their heads before her goes 35
 The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot choose but hear;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner: 40

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
 Was tyrannous and strong:
 He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
 And chased us south along.

"With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45
 As who pursued with yell and blow
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,
 And forward bends his head,
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
 And southward aye we fled. 50

"And now there came both mist and snow,
 And it grew wondrous cold;
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
 As green as emerald.

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts 55
 Did send a dismal sheen:
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
 The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
 The ice was all around: 60
 It cracked and growled, and roared and
 howled,
 Like noises in a swound!

"At length did cross an Albatross:
 Thorough the fog it came:
 As if it had been a Christian soul, 65
 We hailed it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
 And round and round it flew.
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
 The helmsman steered us through! 70

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
 The Albatross did follow,
 And every day, for food or play,
 Came to the mariners' hollo!

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75
 It perched for vespers nine;
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke
 white,
 Glimmered the white Moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
 From the fiends, that plague thee
 thus! — 80
 Why look'st thou so?" — "With my cross-
 bow
 I shot the Albatross!"

PART II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:
 Out of the sea came he,
 Still hid in mist, and on the left 85
 Went down into the sea.

"And the good south wind still blew be-
 hind,
 But no sweet bird did follow,
 Nor any day, for food or play,
 Came to the mariners' hollo! 90

"And I had done a hellish thing,
 And it would work 'em woe;
 For all averred, I had killed the bird
 That made the breeze to blow.
 Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay 95
 That made the breeze to blow!

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
 The glorious Sun uprist:
 Then all averred, I had killed the bird
 That brought the fog and mist. 100
 'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
 That bring the fog and mist.

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam
 flew,
 The furrow followed free:
 We were the first that ever burst 105
 Into that silent sea.

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt
 down,
 'Twas sad as sad could be;
 And we did speak only to break
 The silence of the sea! 110

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

"Day after day, day after day, 115
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

"Water, water, every where, 120
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs 125
Upon the slimy sea.

"About, about, in reel and rout,
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils, 130
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

"And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us,
From the land of mist and snow.

"And every tongue, through utter 135
drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

"Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks 140
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! A weary time! 145
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward I beheld
A something in the sky.

"At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist: 150
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite, 155
It plunged and tacked and veered.

"With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood, 160
And cried, "A sail! a sail!"

"With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in, 165
As they were drinking all.

"See! see (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!" 170

"The western wave was all a-flame:
The day was well nigh done:
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove sud-
denly 175
Betwixt us and the Sun.

"And straight the Sun was flecked with
bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered,
With broad and burning face. 180

"Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat
loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

"Are those *her* ribs through which the
Sun

185

Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is death that woman's mate?

"Her lips were red, her looks were
free,

190

Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

"The naked hulk alongside came,

195

And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won, I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

"The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;

200

With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

"We listened and looked sideways up!

Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!

205

The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;

From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon with one bright star

210

Within the nether tip.

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

215

"Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

"The souls did from their bodies fly —

220

They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

PART IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!

I fear thy skinny hand!

225

And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown." —

"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-
Guest!

230

This body dropt not down.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!

And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

235

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

"I looked upon the rotting sea,

240

And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

245

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and
the sky,

250

Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

"The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:

The look with which they looked on
me

255

Had never passed away.

"An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

260

"The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up, 265
And a star or two beside —

"Her beams bemooked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway 270
A still and awful red.

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light 275
Fell off in hoary flakes.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track 280
Was a flash of golden fire.

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware! 285
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

"The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank 290
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

"Oh, sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven, 295
That slid into my soul.

"The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained. 300

"My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs: 305
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

"And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear; 310
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

"The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about; 315
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black
cloud; 320
The Moon was at its edge.

"The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag, 325
A river steep and wide.

"The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan. 330

"They groaned, they stirred, they all up-
rose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

"The helmsman steered, the ship moved
on; 335
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do:
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
We were a ghastly crew. 340

"The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me."

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!" 345
 "Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
 Which to their corpses came again,
 But a troop of spirits blest:

"For when it dawned — they dropped their
 arms, 350
 And clustered round the mast;
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
 mouths,
 And from their bodies passed.

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
 Then darted to the Sun; 355
 Slowly the sounds come back again,
 Now mixed, now one by one.

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
 I heard the sky-lark sing;
 Sometimes all little birds that are, 360
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air
 With their sweet jargoning!

"And now 'twas like all instruments,
 Now like a lonely flute;
 And now it is an angel's song, 365
 That makes the heavens be mute.

"It ceased; yet still the sails made on
 A pleasant noise till noon,
 A noise like of a hidden brook
 In the leafy month of June, 370
 That to the sleeping woods all night
 Singeth a quiet tune.

"Till noon we quietly sailed on,
 Yet never a breeze did breathe:
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship, 375
 Moved onward from beneath.

"Under the keel nine fathom deep,
 From the land of mist and snow,
 The spirit slid; and it was he
 That made the ship to go. 380
 The sails at noon left off their tune,
 And the ship stood still also.

"The Sun, right up above the mast,
 Had fixed her to the ocean;

But in a minute she 'gan stir, 385
 With a short uneasy motion —
 Backwards and forwards half her length,
 With a short uneasy motion.

"Then like a pawing horse let go,
 She made a sudden bound: 390
 It flung the blood into my head,
 And I fell down in a swoond.

"How long in that same fit I lay,
 I have not to declare;
 But ere my living life returned, 395
 I heard, and in my soul discerned
 Two voices in the air.

"'Is it he?' quoth one, 'is this the man?
 By Him who died on cross,
 With his cruel bow he laid full low 400
 The harmless Albatross.

"'The spirit who bideth by himself
 In the land of mist and snow,
 He loved the bird that loved the man
 Who shot him with his bow.' 405

"The other was a softer voice,
 As soft as honey-dew:
 Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
 And penance more will do.'

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

"'But tell me, tell me! speak again 410
 Thy soft response renewing —
 What makes that ship drive on so fast?
 What is the ocean doing?'

SECOND VOICE

"'Still as a slave before his lord,
 The ocean hath no blast; 415
 His great bright eye most silently
 Up to the Moon is cast —

"'If he may know which way to go;
 For she guides him, smooth or grim.
 See, brother, see! how graciously 420
 She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE

"But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?"

SECOND VOICE

"The air is cut way before,
And closes from behind. 425

"Fly brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

"I woke, and we were sailing on, 430
As in a gentle weather:

'Twas night, calm night, the moon was
high;
The dead men stood together.

"All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter: 435
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

"The pang, the curse, with which they
died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440
Nor turn them up to pray.

"And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen — 445

"Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend 450
Doth close behind him tread.

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade. 455

"It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

"Oh, dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see? 465
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

"We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
'O let me be awake, my God! 470
Or let me sleep away.'

"The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon. 475

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

"And the bay was white with silent
light, 480
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

"A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were: 485
I turned my eyes upon the deck —
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man, 490
On every corse there stood.

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light: 495

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart —
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

"The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast: 505
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

"I saw a third — I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns 510
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea. 515
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

"He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump: 520
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and 525
fair,
That signal made but now?'

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said —
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those 530
sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

"'Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along:
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

"'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look —
(The pilot made reply)
I am a-feared' — 'Push on, push on!' 540
Said the Hermit cheerily.

"The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard. 545

"Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

"Stunned by that loud and dreadful
sound, 550
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days
drowned,
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat. 555

"Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

"I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked, 560
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go, 565
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree, 570
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow. 575
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?'

"Forthwith this frame of mine was
wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale; 580
And then it left me free.

"Since then at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns. 585

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach. 590

"What loud uproar bursts from that door:
The wedding-guests are there;
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are;
And hark the little vesper bell, 595
Which biddeth me to prayer!

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be. 600

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

"To walk together to the kirk, 605
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell 610
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small; 615
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the Wedding-Guest 620
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn. 625

CHRISTABEL

(1797-1800)

PART I

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing
cock;
Tu-whit! — Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew. 5

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the
hour; 10

Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark. 15
The thin grey cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is grey: 20
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late, 25
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothèd knight;

And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far
away. 30

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest misletoe;
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree, 35
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady; Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell. — 40
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air 45
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek —
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can, 50
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the
sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak, 55
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone: 60
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were;
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair. 65
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly!

"Mary mother, save me now!"
Said Christabel; "and who art thou?" 70

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet: —
"Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no
fear!" 75
Said Christabel, "How camest thou here?"
And the lady, whose voice was faint and
sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet: —

"My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine: 80
Five warriors seized me yesternorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and
fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind, 85
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were
white:

And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be; 90
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced, I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive. 95
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell —
I thought I heard, some minutes past, 100
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand," thus ended she,
"And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine: 105
"O well, bright dame, may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free 110
Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.

Her gracious stars the lady blest,
 And thus spake on sweet Christabel: 115
 "All our household are at rest,
 The hall as silent as the cell;
 Sir Leoline is weak in health,
 And may not well awakened be,
 But we will move as if in stealth;" 120
 And I beseech your courtesy,
 This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
 Took the key that fitted well;
 A little door she opened straight, 125
 All in the middle of the gate;
 The gate that was ironed within and with-

out,
 Where an army in battle array had
 marched out.

The lady sank, belike through pain,
 And Christabel with might and main 130
 Lifted her up, a weary weight,
 Over the threshold of the gate:
 Then the lady rose again,
 And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear, 135
 They crossed the court: right glad they
 were.

And Christabel devoutly cried
 To the lady by her side,
 "Praise we the Virgin all divine,
 Who hath rescued thee from thy dis-
 tress!" 140

"Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,
 "I cannot speak for weariness."
 So free from danger, free from fear,
 They crossed the court: right glad they
 were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old 145
 Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
 The mastiff old did not awake,
 Yet she an angry moan did make!
 And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
 Never till now she uttered yell 150
 Beneath the eye of Christabel.
 Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
 For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
 Pass as lightly as you will! 155
 The brands were flat, the brands were
 dying,

Amid their own white ashes lying;
 But when the lady passed, there came
 A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
 And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160
 And nothing else saw she thereby,
 Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline
 tall,

Which hung in a murky old niche in the
 wall.

"O softly tread," said Christabel,
 "My father seldom sleepeth well." 165

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
 And jealous of the listening air,
 They steal their way from stair to stair,
 Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
 And now they pass the Baron's room, 170
 As still as death, with stifled breath!
 And now have reached her chamber door;
 And now doth Geraldine press down
 The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air, 175
 And not a moonbeam enters here.
 But they without its light can see
 The chamber carved so curiously,
 Carved with figures strange and sweet,
 All made out of the carver's brain, 180
 For a lady's chamber meet:
 The lamp with twofold silver chain
 Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
 But Christabel the lamp will trim. 185
 She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
 And left it swinging to and fro,
 While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
 Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine, 190
 I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
 It is a wine of virtuous powers;
 My mother made it of wild flowers."

"And will your mother pity me,
 Who am a maiden most forlorn?" 195

Christabel answered — "Woe is me!
 She died the hour that I was born.
 I have heard the grey-haired friar tell,
 How on her death-bed she did say,
 That she should hear the castle-bell 200
 Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
 O mother dear! that thou wert here!"
 "I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"

But soon, with altered voice, said she —
 "Off, wandering mother! Peak and
 pine! 205

I have power to bid thee flee."
 Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
 Why stares she with unsettled eye?
 Can she the bodiless dead espy?
 And why with hollow voice cries she, 210
 "Off, woman, off! this hour is mine —
 Though thou her guardian spirit be,
 Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
 And raised to heaven her eyes so
 blue — 215

"Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride —
 Dear lady! it hath wildered you!"
 The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
 And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank: 220
 Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
 And from the floor, whereon she sank,
 The lofty lady stood upright:
 She was most beautiful to see,
 Like a lady of a far countrée. 225

And thus the lofty lady spake —
 "All they, who live in the upper sky,
 Do love you, holy Christabel!
 And you love them, and for their sâke,
 And for the good which me befell, 230
 Even I in my degree will try,
 Fair maiden, to requite you well.
 But now unrobe yourself; for I
 Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!" 235
 And as the lady bade, did she.
 Her gentle limbs did she undress
 And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain, of weal and woe,
 So many thoughts moved to and fro, 240
 That vain it were her lids to close;
 So half-way from the bed she rose,
 And on her elbow did recline
 To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed, 245
 And slowly rolled her eyes around;
 Then drawing in her breath aloud,
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound
 The cincture from beneath her breast:
 Her silken robe, and inner vest, 250
 Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
 Behold! her bosom and half her side —
 A sight to dream of, not to tell!
 O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs: 255
 Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
 Deep from within she seems half-way
 To lift some weight with sick assay,
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
 Then suddenly, as one defied, 260
 Collects herself in scorn and pride,
 And lay down by the maiden's side! —
 And in her arms the maid she took,
 Ah, wel-a-day!

And with low voice and doleful look 265
 These words did say:

"In the touch of this bosom there worketh
 a spell,
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
 Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-
 morrow,
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my
 sorrow; 270

But vainly thou warrest,
 For this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heard'st a low moaning, 275
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly
 fair:

And didst bring her home with thee in love
 and in charity,
 To shield her and shelter her from the
 damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I

It was a lovely sight to see
 The lady Christabel, when she 280
 Was praying at the old oak tree.
 Amid the jagged shadows
 Of mossy leafless boughs, \n
 Kneeling in the moonlight,
 To make her gentle vows; 285
 Her slender palms together prest,
 Heaving sometimes on her breast;
 Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
 Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
 And both blue eyes more bright than
 clear, 290
 Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah, woe is me!)
 Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
 Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
 Dreaming that alone, which is— 295
 O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
 The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
 And lo! the worker of these harms,
 That holds the maiden in her arms,
 Seems to slumber still and mild, 300
 As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
 O Geraldine! since arms of thine
 Have been the lovely lady's prison.
 O Geraldine! one hour was thine— 305
 Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
 The night-birds all that hour were still.
 But now they are jubilant anew,
 From cliff and tower, tu-whoo! tu-whoo!
 Tu-whoo! tu-whoo! from wood and
 fell! 310

And see! the lady Christabel
 Gathers herself from out her trance;
 Her limbs relax, her countenance
 Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
 Close o'er her eyes; and tears she
 sheds— 315
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
 And oft the while she seems to smile
 As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
 Like a youthful hermitess, 320

Beauteous in a wilderness,
 Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
 And, if she move unquietly,
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free
 Comes back and tingles in her feet. 325
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
 What if her guardian spirit 'twere,
 What if she knew her mother near?
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,
 That saints will aid if men will call: 330
 For the blue sky bends over all.

PART II

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
 Knells us back to a world of death.
 These words Sir Leoline first said,
 When he rose and found his lady dead: 335
 These words Sir Leoline will say
 Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began
 That still at dawn the sacristan,
 Who duly pulls the heavy bell, 340
 Five and forty beads must tell
 Between each stroke—a warning knell,
 Which not a soul can choose but hear
 From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, "So let it knell! 345
 And let the drowsy sacristan
 Still count as slowly as he can!"
 There is no lack of such, I ween,
 As well fill up the space between.
 In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair, 350
 And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
 With ropes of rock and bells of air
 Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
 Who all give back, one after t'other,
 The death-note to their living brother; 355
 And oft too, by the knell offended,
 Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
 The devil mocks the doleful tale
 With a merry peal from Borrodale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud 360
 That merry peal comes ringing loud;
 And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
 And rises lightly from the bed;

Puts on her silken vestments white,
 And tricks her hair in lovely plight, 365
 And nothing doubting of her spell
 Awakens the lady Christabel.
 "Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
 I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied 370
 The same who lay down by her side —
 O rather say, the same whom she
 Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
 Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
 For she belike hath drunken deep 375
 Of all the blessedness of sleep!
 And while she spake, her looks, her air,
 Such gentle thankfulness declare,
 That (so it seemed) her girded vests
 Grew tight beneath her heaving 380
 breasts.

"Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel,
 "Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
 And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
 Did she the lofty lady greet
 With such perplexity of mind 385
 As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
 Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
 That He, who on the cross did groan,
 Might wash away her sins unknown, 390
 She forthwith led fair Geraldine
 To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.
 The lovely maid and the lady tall
 Are pacing both into the hall,
 And pacing on through page and 400
 groom,
 Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
 His gentle daughter to his breast,
 With cheerful wonder in his eyes
 The lady Geraldine espies, 400
 And gave such welcome to the same,
 As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
 And when she told her father's name,
 Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale, 405
 Murmuring o'er the name again,
 Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
 But whispering tongues can poison truth;
 And constancy lives in realms above; 410
 And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
 And to be wroth with one we love
 Doth work like madness in the brain.
 And thus it chanced, as I divine,
 With Roland and Sir Leoline. 415
 Each spake words of high disdain
 And insult to his heart's best brother:
 They parted — ne'er to meet again!
 But never either found another.
 To free the hollow heart from pain-
 ing — 420

They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
 Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
 A dreary sea now flows between; —
 But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
 Shall wholly do away, I ween, 425
 The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
 Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
 And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
 Came back upon his heart again. 430

O then the Baron forgot his age,
 His noble heart swelled high with rage;
 He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
 He would proclaim it far and wide,
 With trump and solemn heraldry, 435
 That they, who thus had wronged the
 dame

Were base as spotted infamy!
 "And if they dare deny the same,
 My herald shall appoint a week,
 And let the recreant traitors seek 440
 My tourney court — that there and then
 I may dislodge their reptile souls
 From the bodies and forms of men!"
 He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
 For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he
 kenned 445
 In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
 And fondly in his arms he took
 Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
 Prolonging it with joyous look. 450

Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw
again —

(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee, 455
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)
Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing
sound:

Whereat the Knight turned wildly
round, 460
And nothing saw, but his own sweet
maid

With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.
The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest, 465
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?" 470
The Baron said — His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he who saw this Geraldine 475
Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed 480
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!

Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud, 485
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along, 490
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

"And when he has crossed the Irthing
flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth
Wood, 495

And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's
wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are
fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, — your music
so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing
feet! 500

And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free —
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me!
He bids thee come without delay 505
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys'
foam: 510

And, by mine honor! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine! —
— For since that evil hour hath flown, 515
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflow-
ing; 520

And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious Hail on all bestowing: —
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee, 525
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me,
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest! 530
For in my sleep I saw that dove,

That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
 And call'st by thy own daughter's name —
 Sir Leoline! I saw the same
 Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan, 535
 Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
 Which when I saw and when I heard,
 I wondered what might ail the bird;
 For nothing near it could I see,
 Save the grass and green herbs underneath
 the old tree. 540

"And in my dream, methought, I went
 To search out what might there be found;
 And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
 That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
 I went and peered, and could descry 545
 No cause for her distressful cry;
 But yet for her dear lady's sake
 I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
 When lo! I saw a bright green snake
 Coiled around its wings and neck. 550
 Green as the herbs on which it couched,
 Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
 And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
 Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
 I woke; it was the midnight hour, 555
 The clock was echoing in the tower;
 But though my slumber was gone by,
 This dream it would not pass away —
 It seems to live upon my eye!
 And thence I vowed this self-same day 560
 With music strong and saintly song
 To wander through the forest bare,
 Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
 Half-listening heard him with a smile; 565
 Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
 His eyes made up of wonder and love;
 And said in courtly accents fine,
 "Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous
 dove,
 With arms more strong than harp or
 song, 570
 Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"
 He kissed her forehead as he spake,
 And Geraldine in maiden wise
 Casting down her large bright eyes,
 With blushing cheek and courtesy fine 575

She turned her from Sir Leoline;
 Softly gathering up her train,
 That o'er her right arm fell again;
 And folded her arms across her chest,
 And couched her head upon her breast, 580
 And looked askance at Christabel —
 Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
 And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her
 head,
 Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye, 585
 And with somewhat of malice, and more of
 dread,
 At Christabel she looked askance! —
 One moment — and the sight was fled!
 But Christabel in dizzy trance
 Stumbling on the unsteady ground 590
 Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
 And Geraldine again turned round,
 And like a thing that sought relief,
 Full of wonder and full of grief,
 She rolled her large bright eyes divine 595
 Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
 She nothing sees — no sight but one!
 The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
 I know not how, in fearful wise, 600
 So deeply had she drunken in
 That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
 That all her features were resigned
 To this sole image in her mind:
 And passively did imitate 605
 That look of dull and treacherous hate!
 And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
 Still picturing that look askance
 With forced unconscious sympathy
 Full before her father's view — 610
 As far as such a look could be
 In eyes so innocent and blue!
 And when the trance was o'er, the maid
 Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
 Then falling at the Baron's feet, 615
 "By my mother's soul do I entreat
 That thou this woman send away!"
 She said: and more she could not say:
 For what she knew she could not tell,
 O'er-mastered by the mighty spell. 620

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
 Sir Leoline? Thy only child
 Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
 So fair, so innocent, so mild;
 The same, for whom thy lady died! 625
 O, by the pangs of her dear mother
 Think thou no evil of thy child!
 For her, and thee, and for no other,
 She prayed the moment ere she died:
 Prayed that the babe for whom she
 died, 630
 Might prove her dear lord's joy and
 pride!
 That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
 Sir Leoline!
 And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
 Her child and thine? 635

Within the Baron's heart and brain
 If thoughts, like these, had any share,
 They only swelled his rage and pain,
 And did but work confusion there.
 His heart was cleft with pain and rage, 640
 His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were
 wild,
 Dishonored thus in his old age;
 Dishonored by his only child,
 And all his hospitality
 To the wronged daughter of his friend 645
 By more than woman's jealousy
 Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
 He rolled his eye with stern regard
 Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
 And said in tones abrupt, austere— 660
 "Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
 I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
 And turning from his own sweet maid,
 The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
 Led forth the lady Geraldine! 655

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II

A little child, a limber elf,
 Singing, dancing to itself,
 A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
 That always finds, and never seeks,
 Makes such a vision to the sight 660
 As fills a father's eyes with light;
 And pleasures flow in so thick and fast

Upon his heart, that he at last
 Must needs express his love's excess
 With words of unmeant bitterness. 665
 Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
 Thoughts so all unlike each other;
 To mutter and mock a broken charm,
 To dally with wrong that does no harm.
 Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty 670
 At each wild word to feel within
 A sweet recoil of love and pity.
 And what, if in a world of sin
 (O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
 Such giddiness of heart and brain 675
 Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
 So talks as it's most used to do.

KUBLA KHAN

(1798)

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
 A stately pleasure-dome decree:
 Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
 Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea. 5
 So twice five miles of fertile ground
 With walls and towers were girdled round:
 And here were gardens bright with
 sinuous rills
 Where blossomed many an incense-bearing
 tree;
 And here were forests ancient as the
 hills, 10
 Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.
 But oh! that deep romantic chasm which
 slanted
 Down the green hill athwart a cedarn
 cover!
 A savage place! as holy and enchanted
 As e'er beneath a waning moon was
 haunted 15
 By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
 And from this chasm, with ceaseless tur-
 moil seething,
 As if this earth in fast thick pants were
 breathing,
 A mighty fountain momentarily was forced;
 Amid whose swift half-intermitted
 burst 20

Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding
hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and
ever

It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy mo-
tion 25

Through wood and dale the sacred river
ran,

Then reached the caverns measureless to
man,

And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from
far

Ancestral voices prophesying war! 30
The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device, 35
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played, 40
Singing of Mount Abora.

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,

To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long, 45

I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!

And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!

His flashing eyes, his floating hair! 50
Weave a circle round him thrice,

And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,

And drunk the milk of Paradise.

LOVE

(1799)

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I 5
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene
Had blended with the lights of eve: 10
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leant against the armèd man,
The statue of the armèd knight;
She stood and listened to my lay, 15
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve. 20

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story —
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush, 25
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand; 30
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love, 35
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face! 40

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den, 45
 And sometimes from the darksome shade,
 And sometimes starting up at once
 In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face
 An angel beautiful and bright; 50
 And that he knew it was a Fiend,
 This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
 He leaped amid a murderous band,
 And saved from outrage worse than
 death 55
 The Lady of the Land!

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
 And how she tended him in vain—
 And ever strove to expiate
 The scorn that crazed his brain;— 60

And that she nursed him in a cave;
 And how his madness went away,
 When on the yellow forest-leaves
 A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reached 65
 That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
 My faltering voice and pausing harp
 Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
 Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve; 70
 The music and the doleful tale,
 The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
 An undistinguishable throng,
 And gentle wishes long subdued, 75
 Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
 She blushed with love, and virgin-shame;
 And like the murmur of a dream,
 I heard her breathe my name. 80

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
 As conscious of my look she stepped—
 Then suddenly, with timorous eye
 She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms, 85
 She pressed me with a meek embrace:
 And bending back her head, looked up,
 And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
 And partly 'twas a bashful art, 90
 That I might rather feel, than see,
 The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
 And told her love with virgin pride;
 And so I won my Genevieve, 95
 My bright and beauteous Bride.

FRANCE: AN ODE

(1798)

I

Ye clouds! that far above me float and
 pause,

Whose pathless march no mortal may
 control!

Ye Ocean-Waves! that, wheresoe'er ye
 roll,

Yield homage only to eternal laws!

Ye Woods! that listen to the nightbirds
 singing, 5

Midway the smooth and perilous slope
 reclined,

Save when your own imperious branches
 swinging,

Have made a solemn music of the
 wind!

Where, like a man beloved of God,
 Through glooms, which never woodman
 trod, 10

How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
 My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds
 I wound,

Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
 By each rude shape and wild unconquer-
 able sound!

O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests
high! 15

And O ye Clouds that far above me
soared!

Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
Yea, every thing that is and will be
free!

Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still
adored 20

The spirit of divinest Liberty.

II

When France in wrath her giant-limbs
upreared,

And with that oath which smote air,
earth and sea,

Stamped her strong foot and said she
would be free,

Bear witness for me, how I hoped and
feared! 25

With what a joy my lofty gratulation
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:

And when to whelm the disenchanted na-
tion,

Like fiends embattled by a wizard's
wand,

The Monarchs marched in evil day, 30
And Britain joined the dire array;

Though dear her shores and circling
ocean,

Though many friendships, many youth-
ful loves

Had swoln the patriot emotion

And flung a magic light o'er all her hills
and groves; 35

Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling

lance,

And shame too long delayed and vain
retreat!

For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim
I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy
flame; 40

But blessed the pæans of delivered
France,

And hung my head and wept at Britain's
name.

III

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's
loud scream

With that sweet music of deliverance
strove!

Though all the fierce and drunken pas-
sions wove 45

A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's
dream!

Ye storms, that round the dawning
East assembled,

The Sun was rising, though ye hid his
light!

And when to soothe my soul, that hoped
and trembled,

The dissonance ceased, and all seemed
calm and bright; 50

When France her front deep-scarred
and gory

Concealed with clustering wreaths of
glory;

When insupportably advancing,

Her arm made mockery of the war-
rior's ramp;

While timid looks of fury glancing, 55

Domestic treason, crushed beneath her
fatal stamp,

Writhed like a wounded dragon in his
gore;

Then I reproached my fears that would
not flee;

"And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach
her lore

In the low huts of them that toil and
groan; 60

And, conquering by her happiness alone,
Shall France compel the nations to be

free,

Till Love and Joy look round, and call
the earth their own."

IV

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those
dreams!

I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud
lament, 65

From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns
sent —

I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained
streams!

Heroes, that for your peaceful country
perished,

And ye, that fleeing, spot your mountain
snows

With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that
I cherished 70

One thought that ever blessed your cruel
foes!

To scatter rage and traitorous guilt
Where Peace her jealous home had
built;

A patriot-race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so
dear; 75

And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the
mountaineer—

O France, that mockest Heaven, adul-
terous, blind,

And patriot only in pernicious toils!
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human
kind? 80

To mix with Kings in the low lust of
sway,

Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous
prey;

To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to
betray?

v

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in
vain, 85

Slaves by their own compulsion! In
mad game

They burst their manacles and wear the
name

Of Freedom, graven on a heavier
chain!

O Liberty! with profitless endeavor
Have I pursued thee, many a weary
hour; 90

But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain
nor ever

Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human
power.

Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays
thee)

Alike from Priestcraft's harpy min-
ions, 95

And factious Blasphemy's obscener
slaves,

Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and play-
mate of the waves!

And there I felt thee!—on that sea-cliff's
verge,

Whose pines, scarce travelled by the
breeze above, 100

Had made one murmur with the distant
surge!

Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples
bare,

And shot my being through earth, sea,
and air,

Possessing all things with intensest love,

O Liberty! my spirit felt thee
there. 105

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

(1798)

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as
before.

The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which
suits 5

Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.

'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange

And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and
wood, 10

This populous village! Sea, and hill, and
wood,

With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame

Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers
not;

Only that film which fluttered on the
grate 15

Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of
nature

Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling
Spirit 20

By its own moods interprets, everywhere
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing
mind,

Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars, 25
To watch that fluttering *stranger!* and as
oft

With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old
church-tower,

Whose bells, the poor man's only music,
rang

From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-
day, 30

So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted
me

With a wild pleasure, falling on mine
ear

Most like articulate sounds of things to
come!

So gazed I, till the soothing things I
dreamt

Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged
my dreams! 35

And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine
eye

Fixed with mock study on my swimming
book:

Save if the door half opened, and I
snatched

A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped
up, 40

For still I hoped to see the *stranger's*
face,

Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more be-
loved,

My play-mate when we both were clothed
alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my
side,

Whose gentle breathings, heard in this
deep calm, 45

Fill up the interspersèd vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!

My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at
thee,

And think that thou shalt learn far other
lore, 50

And in far other scenes! For I was
reared

In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and
stars.

But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a
breeze

By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the
crag 55

Of ancient mountain, and beneath the
clouds,

Which image in their bulk both lakes and
shores

And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and
hear

The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy
God 60

Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.

Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to
thee, 65

Whether the summer clothe the general
earth

With greenness, or the redbreast sit and
sing

Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare
branch

Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the
eave-drops fall 70

Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

DEJECTION: AN ODE

(1802)

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
 With the old Moon in her arms;
 And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
 We shall have a deadly storm.
Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.

I

Well! If the bard was weather-wise, who
 made

The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick
 Spence,

This night, so tranquil now, will not go
 hence

Unroused by winds that ply a busier trade
 Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy
 flakes, 5

Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and
 rakes

Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,

Which better far were mute.

For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
 And overspread with phantom light, 10
 (With swimming phantom light o'er-
 spread,

But rimmed and circled by a silver
 thread)

I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
 The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
 And oh! that even now the gust were
 swelling, 15

And the slant night-shower driving loud
 and fast!

Those sounds which oft have raised me,
 whilst they awed,

And sent my soul abroad,

Might now perhaps their wonted impulse
 give,

Might startle this dull pain, and make it
 move and live! 20

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and
 drear,

A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
 Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
 In word, or sigh, or tear —

O Lady! in this wan and heartless
 mood, 25

To other thoughts by yonder throstle
 wooed,

All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
 Have I been gazing on the western sky,

And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
 And still I gaze — and with how blank an
 eye! 30

And those thin clouds above, in flakes and
 bars,

That give away their motion to the stars;
 Those stars, that glide behind them or be-
 tween,

Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always
 seen:

Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it
 grew 35

In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
 I see them all so excellently fair,

I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;

And what can these avail 40

To lift the smothering weight from off my
 breast?

It were a vain endeavor,

Though I should gaze for ever

On that green light that lingers in the
 west:

I may not hope from outward forms to
 win 45

The passion and the life whose fountains
 are within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,

And in our life alone does Nature live:

Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her
 shroud!

And would we aught behold, of higher
 worth, 50

Than that inanimate cold world allowed

To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,

Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud

Enveloping the Earth — 55

And from the soul itself must there be
sent

A sweet and potent voice, of its own
birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of
me

What this strong music in the soul may
be! 60

What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous
mist,

This beautiful and beauty-making power.

Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was
given,

Save to the pure, and in their purest
hour, — 65

Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once
and shower, —

Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power
Which, wedding Nature to us, gives in
dower

A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the
proud — 70

Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous
cloud —

We in ourselves rejoice!

And thence flows all that charms or ear
or sight,

All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colors a suffusion from that light. 75

VI

There was a time when, though my path
was rough,

This joy within me dallied with dis-
tress,

And all misfortunes were but as the
stuff

Whence Fancy made me dreams of hap-
piness:

For hope grew round me, like the twining
vine, 80

And fruits and foliage not my own seemed
mine.

But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;

But oh! each visitation

Suspends what nature gave me at my
birth, 85

My shaping spirit of Imagination.

For not to think of what I needs must
feel,

But to be still and patient, all I can;

And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural
man — 90

This was my sole resource, my only
plan:

Till that which suits a part infects the
whole,

And now is almost grown the habit of my
soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my
mind,

Reality's dark dream! 95

I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What
a scream

Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that
rav'st without,

Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted
tree, 100

Or pine-grove whither woodman never
clomb,

Or lonely house, long held the witches'
home,

Methinks were fitter instruments for
thee,

Mad Lutanist! who in this month of
showers,

Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping
flowers, 105

Mak'st Devil's yule, with worse than
wintry song,

The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves
among.

Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!

Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold!
 What tell'st thou now about? 110
 'Tis of the rushing of an host in
 rout,
 With groans of trampled men, with
 smarting wounds —
 At once they groan with pain, and shudder
 with the cold!
 But hush! there is a pause of deepest
 silence!
 And all that noise, as of a rushing
 crowd, 115
 With groans, and tremulous shudder-
 ings — all is over —
 It tells another tale, with sounds less
 deep and loud!
 A tale of less affright,
 And tempered with delight,
 As Otway's self had framed the tender
 lay, — 120
 'Tis of a little child
 Upon a lonesome wild,
 Not far from home, but she hath lost her
 way:
 And now moans low in bitter grief and
 fear,
 And now screams loud, and hopes to make
 her mother hear. 125

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I
 of sleep:
 Full seldom may my friend such vigils
 keep!
 Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of
 healing,
 And may this storm be but a mountain-
 birth,
 May all the stars hang bright above her
 dwelling, 130
 Silent as though they watched the sleep-
 ing Earth!
 With light heart may she rise,
 Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
 Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her
 voice;
 To her may all things live, from pole to
 pole, 135

Their life the eddying of her living soul!
 O simple spirit, guided from above,
 Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
 Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

THE GOOD, GREAT MAN

(1802)

"How seldom, friend! a good great man
 inherits
 Honor or wealth with all his worth
 and pains!
 It sounds like stories from the land of
 spirits
 If any man obtain that which he merits,
 Or any merit that which he obtains." 5

REPLY TO THE ABOVE

For shame, dear friend, renounce this
 canting strain!
 What would'st thou have a good great
 man obtain?
 Place? titles? salary? a gilded chain?
 Or throne of corpses which his sword had
 slain? 10
 Greatness and goodness are not means,
 but ends!
 Hath he not always treasures, always
 friends,
 The good great man? *three* treasures,
 LOVE, and LIGHT,
 And CALM THOUGHTS, regular as infant's
 breath:
 And three firm friends, more sure than
 day and night, 15
 HIMSELF, his MAKER, and the ANGEL
 DEATH!

THE PAINS OF SLEEP

(1803)

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
 It hath not been my use to pray
 With moving lips or bended knees;
 But silently, by slow degrees,
 My spirit I to Love compose, 5
 In humble trust mine eye-lids close,
 With reverential resignation,

No wish conceived, no thought exprest,
Only a sense of supplication;
A sense o'er all my soul imprest 10
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, every where
Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.

But yester-night I prayed aloud
In anguish and in agony, 15
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,
And whom I scorned, those only strong! 20
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled, and yet burning still!
Desire with loathing strangely mixed
On wild or hateful objects fixed.
Fantastic passions! maddening brawl! 25
And shame and terror over all!
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know
Whether I suffered, or I did:
For all seemed guilt, remorse or woe, 30
My own or others still the same
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame!

So two nights passed: the night's dismay
Saddened and stunned the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me 35
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud
scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings strange and
wild,
I wept as I had been a child: 40
And having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood,
Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stained with sin,—
For aye entempesting anew 45
The unfathomable hell within,
The horror of their deeds to view,
To know and loathe, yet wish and do!
Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me? 50
To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

THE KNIGHT'S TOMB

(1817 ?)

Where is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kel-
lyn?
Where may the grave of that good man
be?—
By the side of a spring, on the breast of
Helvellyn,
Under the twigs of a young birch tree!
The oak that in summer was sweet to
hear, 5
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the
year,
And whistled and roared in the winter
alone,
Is gone,—and the birch in its stead is
grown.—
The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust;— 10
His soul is with the saints, I trust.

YOUTH AND AGE

(1823-32)

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young! 5
When I was young?—Ah, woful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands, 10
How lightly *then* it flashed along:—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide! 15
Nought cared this body for wind or
weather
When Youth and I lived in't together.
Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-
like, 20
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!

Ere I was old? Ah woful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O, Youth! for years so many and
sweet, 25
'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be that Thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet tolled:—
And thou wert aye a masker bold! 30
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe, that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips, 35
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve! 40
Where no hope is, life 's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
When we are old:
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave 45
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismiss;
Yet hath out-stayed his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

WORK WITHOUT HOPE

(1825)

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave
their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the
wing—
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of
Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing, 5
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor
sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where ama-
ranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams
of nectar flow.

Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom
ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich
streams, away! 10
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow,
I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that
drowse my soul?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a
sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

THE GARDEN OF BOCCACCIO

(1828)

Of late, in one of those most weary
hours,
When life seems emptied of all genial
powers,
A dreary mood, which he who ne'er has
known
May bless his happy lot, I sate alone;
And, from the numbing spell to win re-
lief, 5
Called on the Past for thought of glee or
grief.
In vain! bereft alike of grief and glee,
I sate and cower'd o'er my own vacancy!
And as I watched the dull continuous
ache,
Which, all else slumb'ring, seemed alone
to wake; 10
O Friend! long wont to notice yet con-
ceal,
And soothe by silence what words cannot
heal,
I but half saw that quiet hand of thine
Place on my desk this exquisite design:
Boccaccio's Garden and its faery, 15
The love, the joyaunce, and the gallantry!
An Idyll, with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
Framed in the silent poesy of form.
Like flocks adown a newly-bathèd steep
Emerging from a mist: or like a
stream 20
Of music soft, that not dispels the sleep,
But casts in happier moulds the slum-
berer's dream;

Gazed by an idle eye, with silent might
 The picture stole upon my inward sight.
 A tremulous warmth crept gradual o'er
 my chest, 25
 As though an infant's finger touched my
 breast.
 And one by one (I know not whence)
 were brought
 All spirits of power that most had stirred
 my thought
 In selfless boyhood, on a new world tost
 Of wonder, and in its own fancies lost; 30
 Or charmed my youth, that, kindled from
 above,
 Loved ere it loved, and sought a form for
 love;
 Or lent a lustre to the earnest scan
 Of manhood, musing what and whence
 is man!
 Wild strain of Scalds, that in the sea-worn
 caves 35
 Rehearsed their war-spell to the winds
 and waves;
 Or fateful hymn of those prophetic maids,
 That called on Hertha in deep forest
 glades;
 Or minstrel lay, that cheered the baron's
 feast;
 Or rhyme of city pomp, of monk and
 priest, 40
 Judge, mayor, and many a guild in long
 array,
 To high-church pacing on the great saint's
 day:
 And many a verse which to myself I
 sang,
 That woke the tear yet stole away the
 pang
 Of hopes which in lamenting I renewed: 45
 And last, a matron now, of sober mien,
 Yet radiant still and with no earthly
 sheen,
 Whom as a faery child my childhood
 wooded
 Even in my dawn of thought — Philos-
 ophy;
 Though then unconscious of herself,
 pardie, 50
 She bore no other name than Poesy;

And, like a gift from heaven, in life-ful
 glee,
 That had but newly left a mother's
 knee,
 Prattled and played with bird and flower,
 and stone,
 As if with elfin playfellows well known, 55
 And life revealed to innocence alone.

Thanks, gentle artist! now I can descry
 Thy fair creation with a mastering eye,
 And all awake! And now in fixed gaze
 stand,
 Now wander through the Eden of thy
 hand; 60
 Praise the green arches, on the fountain
 clear
 See fragment shadows of the crossing
 deer;
 And with that serviceable nymph I stoop,
 The crystal from its restless pool to scoop.
 I see no longer! I myself am there, 65
 Sit on the ground-sward, and the banquet
 share.
 'Tis I, that sweep that lute's love-echo-
 ing strings,
 And gaze upon the maid who gazing
 sings:
 Or pause and listen to the tinkling bells
 From the high tower, and think that
 there she dwells. 70
 With old Boccaccio's soul I stand possess'd,
 And breathe an air like life, that swells
 my chest.

The brightness of the world, O thou once
 free,
 And always fair, rare land of courtesy!
 O Florence! with the Tuscan fields and
 hills 75
 And famous Arno, fed with all their
 rills;
 Thou brightest star of star-bright Italy!
 Rich, ornate, populous, — all treasures
 thine,
 The golden corn, the olive, and the vine,
 Fair cities, gallant mansions, castles old, 80
 And forests, where beside his leafy hold

The sullen boar hath heard the distant
 horn,
 And whets his tusks against the gnarled
 thorn;
 Palladian palace with its storied halls;
 Fountains, where Love lies listening to
 their falls; 85
 Gardens, where flings the bridge its airy
 span,
 And Nature makes her happy home with
 man;
 Where many a gorgeous flower is duly
 fed
 With its own rill, on its own spangled bed,
 And wreaths the marble urn, or leans its
 head, 90
 A mimic mourner, that with veil with-
 drawn
 Weeps liquid gems, the presents of the
 dawn;—
 Thine all delights, and every muse is
 thine;
 And more than all, the embrace and inter-
 twine
 Of all with all in gay and twinkling
 dance! 95

Mid Gods of Greece and warriors of ro-
 mance,
 See! Boccace sits, unfolding on his knees
 The new found roll of old Mæonides;
 But from his mantle's fold, and near the
 heart,
 Peers Ovid's Holy Book of Love's sweet
 smart! 100
 O all-enjoying and all-blending sage,
 Long be it mine to con thy mazy page,
 Where half concealed, the eye of fancy
 views
 Fauns, nymphs, and wingèd saints, all
 gracious to thy muse!
 Still in thy garden let me watch their
 pranks, 105
 And see in Dian's vest between the ranks
 Of the trim vines, some maid that half
 believes
 The vestal fires, of which her lover grieves,
 With that sly satyr peeping through the
 leaves!

EPITAPH

(1833)

Stop, Christian passer-by! — Stop, child of
 God,
 And read with gentle breast. Beneath this
 sod
 A poet lies, or that which once seemed
 he.—
 O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.;
 That he who many a year with toil of
 breath 5
 Found death in life, may here find life in
 death!
 Mercy for praise, to be forgiven for fame,
 He asked, and hoped, through Christ. Do
 thou the same!

CHARLES LAMB

(1775-1834)

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

(1798)

I have had playmates, I have had com-
 panions,
 In my days of childhood, in my joyful
 schooldays —
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carous-
 ing,
 Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom
 cronies — 5
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
 Closed are her doors on me, I must not
 see her —
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no
 man; 10
 Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
 Left him, to muse on the old familiar
 faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my
 childhood;
 Earth seemed a desert I was bound to
 traverse,
 Seeking to find the old familiar faces. 15
 Friend of my bosom, thou more than a
 brother,
 Why wert not thou born in my father's
 dwelling?
 So might we talk of the old familiar
 faces —
 How some they have died, and some they
 have left me,
 And some are taken from me; all are de-
 parted; 20
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

ROBERT SOUTHEY
 (1774-1843)

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM
 (1798)

It was a summer evening;
 Old Kaspar's work was done,
 And he before his cottage door
 Was sitting in the sun;
 And by him sported on the green 5
 His little grandchild Wilhelmine.
 She saw her brother Peterkin
 Roll something large and round,
 Which he beside the rivulet
 In playing there had found. 10
 He came to ask what he had found,
 That was so large, and smooth, and round.
 Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
 Who stood expectant by;
 And then the old man shook his head, 15
 And with a natural sigh,
 "'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
 "Who fell in the great victory.
 "I find them in the garden,
 For there's many here about; 20
 And often, when I go to plough,
 The ploughshare turns them out;

For many thousand men," said he,
 "Were slain in that great victory."
 "Now tell us what 'twas all about," 25
 Young Peterkin, he cries;
 And little Wilhelmine looks up
 With wonder-waiting eyes;
 "Now tell us all about the war,
 And what they fought each other for." 30
 "It was the English," Kaspar cried,
 "Who put the French to rout;
 But what they fought each other for,
 I could not well make out;
 But everybody said," quoth he, 35
 "That 'twas a famous victory.
 "My father lived at Blenheim then,
 Yon little stream hard by;
 They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
 And he was forced to fly; 40
 So with his wife and child he fled,
 Nor had he where to rest his head.
 "With fire and sword the country round
 Was wasted far and wide,
 And many a childing mother then, 45
 And new-born baby, died;
 But things like that, you know, must be
 At every famous victory.
 "They say it was a shocking sight
 After the field was won; 50
 For many thousand bodies here
 Lay rotting in the sun;
 But things like that, you know, must be
 After a famous victory.
 "Great praise the Duke of Marlbro'
 won, 55
 And our good Prince Eugene."
 "Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!"
 Said little Wilhelmine.
 "Nay, nay, my little girl," quoth he,
 "It was a famous victory. 60
 "And everybody praised the Duke
 Who this great fight did win."
 "But what good came of it at last?"
 Quoth little Peterkin.
 "Why, that I cannot tell," said he; 65
 "But 'twas a famous victory."

THOMAS CAMPBELL

(1777-1844)

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

A NAVAL ODE

(1800-01)

Ye mariners of England
 That guard our native seas,
 Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
 The battle and the breeze!
 Your glorious standard launch again 5
 To match another foe,
 And sweep through the deep,
 While the stormy winds do blow—
 While the battle rages loud and long,
 And the stormy winds do blow. 10

The spirits of your fathers
 Shall start from every wave!
 For the deck it was their field of fame,
 And Ocean was their grave:
 Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell, 15
 Your manly hearts shall glow,
 As ye sweep through the deep,
 While the stormy winds do blow—
 While the battle rages loud and long,
 And the stormy winds do blow. 20

Brittania needs no bulwark,
 No towers along the steep;
 Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
 Her home is on the deep;
 With thunders from her native oak, 25
 She quells the floods below,
 As they roar on the shore,
 When the stormy winds do blow—
 When the battle rages loud and long,
 And the stormy winds do blow. 30

The meteor flag of England
 Shall yet terrific burn,
 Till danger's troubled night depart,
 And the star of peace return;
 Then, then, ye ocean-warriors! 35
 Our song and feast shall flow
 To the fame of your name,
 When the storm has ceased to blow—
 When the fiery fight is heard no more,
 And the storm has ceased to blow. 40

SIR WALTER SCOTT

(1771-1832)

THE VIOLET

(1797)

The violet in her green-wood bower,
 Where birchen boughs with hazels
 mingle,
 May boast itself the fairest flower
 In glen or copse or forest dingle.

Though fair her gems of azure hue, 5
 Beneath the dewdrop's weight reclining;
 I've seen an eye of lovelier blue,
 More sweet through watery lustre
 shining.

The summer sun that dew shall dry
 Ere yet the day be past its morrow; 10
 Nor longer in my false love's eye
 Remained the tear of parting sorrow.

THE EVE OF SAINT JOHN

(1799)

The Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day;
 He spurred his courser on,
 Without stop or stay, down the rocky
 way,
 That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch 5
 His banner broad to rear;
 He went not 'gainst the English yew
 To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack was braced, and his
 helmet was laced,
 And his vaunt-brace of proof he
 wore; 10
 At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel
 sperthe,
 Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron returned in three days' space,
 And his looks were sad and sour;
 And weary was his courser's pace 15
 As he reached his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
 Ran red with English blood;
 Where the Douglas true and the bold
 Buccleuch
 'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood. 20

Yet was his helmet hacked and hewed,
 His acorn pierced and tore,
 His axe and his dagger with blood im-
 brued,—
 But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage, 25
 He held him close and still;
 And he whistled thrice for his little foot-
 page,
 His name was English Will.

"Come thou hither, my little foot-page,
 Come hither to my knee; 30
 Though thou art young and tender of
 age,
 I think thou art true to me.

"Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
 And look thou tell me true!
 Since I from Smaylho'me tower have
 been, 35
 What did thy lady do?"—

"My lady, each night, sought the lonely
 light
 That burns on the wild Watchfold;
 For, from height to height, the beacons
 bright
 Of the English foemen told. 40

"The bittern clamored from the moss,
 The wind blew loud and shrill;
 Yet the craggy pathway she did cross
 To the eiry Beacon Hill.

"I watched her steps, and silent came 45
 Where she sat her on a stone;—
 No watchman stood by the dreary flame,
 It burnèd all alone.

"The second night I kept her in sight
 Till to the fire she came, 50
 And, by Mary's might! an armèd knight
 Stood by the lonely flame.

"And many a word that warlike lord
 Did speak to my lady there;
 But the rain fell fast and loud blew the
 blast, 55
 And I heard not what they were.

"The third night there the sky was fair,
 And the mountain-blast was still,
 As again I watched the secret pair
 On the lonesome Beacon Hill. 60

"And I heard her name the midnight hour,
 And name this holy eve;
 And say, 'Come this night to thy lady's
 bower,
 Ask no bold baron's leave.

"He lifts his spear with the bold Buc-
 cleuch; 65
 His lady is all alone;
 The door she'll undo, to her knight so
 true,
 On the eve of good Saint John.'—

"I cannot come; I must not come;
 I dare not come to thee: 70
 On the eve of Saint John I must wander
 alone:
 In thy bower I may not be.'—

"Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight!
 Thou shouldst not say me nay;
 For the eve is sweet, and when lovers
 meet, 75
 Is worth the whole summer's day.

"And I'll chain the blood-hound, and
 the warder shall not sound,
 And rushes shall be strewed on the
 stair;
 So, by the black rood-stone and by holy
 Saint John,
 I conjure thee, my love, to be there!' 80

"Though the blood-hound be mute and
 the rush beneath my foot,
 And the warder his bugle should not
 blow,
 Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber
 to the east,
 And my footstep he would know.'—

"O fear not the priest who sleepeth to
the east, 85
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en;
And there to say mass, till three days do
pass,
For the soul of a knight that is
slayne." —

"He turned him around, and grimly he
frowned,
Then he laughed right scornfully: 90
"He who says the mass-rite for the soul
of that knight
May as well say mass for me!"

"At the lone midnight hour, when bad
spirits have power,
In thy chamber will I be.' —
With that he was gone, and my lady left
alone, 95
And no more did I see."

Then changed, I trow, was that bold
Baron's brow
From the dark to the blood-red high;
"Now, tell me the mien of the knight
thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!" — 100

"His arms shone full bright in the beacon's
red light;
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a hound in a silver
leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the
yew." —

"Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-
page, 105
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and low laid in
mould,
All under the Eildon-tree." —

"Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!
For I heard her name his name; 110
And that lady bright, she called the knight
Sir Richard of Coldinghame."

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I
trow,
From high blood-red to pale:
"The grave is deep and dark, and the
corpse is stiff and stark, 115
So I may not trust thy tale."

"Where fair Tweed flows round holy
Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain. 120

"The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drowned the name;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the
white monks do sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!"

He passed the court-gate and he oped the
tower-gate, 125
And he mounted the narrow stair
To the bartizan-seat, where with maids
that on her wait,
He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood;
Looked over hill and vale; 130
Over Tweed's fair flood and Mertoun's
wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!"
"Now hail, thou Baron true!
What news, what news, from Ancram
fight? 135
What news from the bold Buccleuch!"

"The Ancram moor is red with gore,
For many a Southron fell;
And Buccleuch has charged us evermore
To watch our beacons well." 140

The lady blushed red, but nothing she
said:
Nor added the Baron a word:
Then she stepped down the stair to her
chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourned, and the Baron
 tossed and turned, 145
 And oft to himself he said:
 "The worms around him creep, and his
 bloody grave is deep —
 It cannot give up the dead!"

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
 The night was well-nigh done, 150
 When a heavy sleep on that baron fell,
 On the eve of good Saint John.

The lady looked through the chamber
 fair,
 By the light of a dying flame;
 And she was aware of a knight stood
 there — 155
 Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,
 "For the holy Virgin's sake!" —
 "Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
 But, lady, he will not awake. 160

"By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
 In bloody grave have I lain;
 The mass and the death-prayer are said
 for me,
 But, lady, they are said in vain.

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair
 strand, 165
 Most foully slain I fell;
 And my restless sprite on the beacon's
 height
 For a space is doomed to dwell;

"At our trysting-place, for a certain space,
 I must wander to and fro; 170
 But I had not had power to come to thy
 bower,
 Hadst thou not conjured me so."

Love mastered fear — her brow she
 crossed:

"How, Richard, hast thou sped?
 And art thou saved, or art thou lost?" 175
 The vision shook his head!

"Who spilleth life shall forfeit life,
 So bid thy lord believe;
 That lawless love is guilt above,
 This awful sign receive." 180

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam,
 His right upon her hand;
 The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
 For it scorched like a fiery brand.

The sable score of fingers four 185
 Remains on that board impressed;
 And for evermore that lady wore
 A covering on her wrist.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower
 Ne'er looks upon the sun; 190
 There is a monk in Melrose tower
 He speaketh word to none.

That nun who ne'er beholds the day,
 That monk who speaks to none —
 That nun was Smaylho'me's lady gay, 195
 That monk the bold Baron.

LOCHINVAR

(From *Marmion*, 1806-08: Canto Fifth,
 Section XII)

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the
 west!

Through all the wide Border his steed
 was the best;

And save his good broadsword he
 weapons had none,

He rode all unarmed, and he rode all
 alone.

So faithful in love, and so dauntless in
 war, 5

There never was knight like the young
 Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake and he stopped
 not for stone,

He swam the Eske river where ford there
 was none;

But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
 The bride had consented, the gallant came
 late: 10

For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Loch-
invar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and
brothers, and all:

Then spoke the bride's father, his hand
on his sword, 15

(For the poor craven bridegroom said
never a word):

"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in
war,

Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord
Lochinvar?"

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit
you denied:

Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like
its tide — 20

And now am I come, with this lost love
of mine

To lead but one measure, drink one cup
of wine.

There are maidens in Scotland more lovely
by far,

That would gladly be bride to the young
Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight
took it up, 25

He quaffed off the wine, and he threw
down the cup.

She looked down to blush, and she looked
up to sigh,

With a smile on her lips, and a tear in
her eye.

He took her soft hand ere her mother
could bar, —

"Now tread we a measure!" said young
Lochinvar. 30

So stately his form, and so lovely her
face,

That never a hall such a galliard did
grace;

While her mother did fret, and her father
did fume,

And the bridegroom stood dangling his
bonnet and plume;

And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere
better by far 35

To have matched our fair cousin with
young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in
her ear,

When they reached the hall-door, and the
charger stood near:

So light to the croupe the fair lady he
swung,

So light to the saddle before her he
sprung! 40

"She is won! we are gone, over bank,
bush, and scaur!

They'll have fleet steeds that follow!"
quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Grames of
the Netherby clan;

Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they
rode and they ran:

There was racing and chasing on Can-
nobie Lee, 45

But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did
they see.

So daring in love and so dauntless in
war,

Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young
Lochinvar?

HUNTING SONG

(1808)

Waken, lords and ladies gay,

On the mountain dawns the day;

All the jolly chase is here,

With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear!

Hounds are in their couples yelling, 5

Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,

Merrily, merrily, mingle they:

"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,

The mist has left the mountain grey; 10

Springlets in the dawn are steaming,

Diamonds on the brake are gleaming:

And foresters have busy been
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay, 15
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the green-wood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot and tall of size; 20
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed;
You shall see him brought to bay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay, 25
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman, who can baulk,
Staunch as hound and fleet as hawk? 30
Think of this and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

*Songs from THE LADY OF THE
LAKE
(1809-10)*

(From Canto First, Section xxxi f.)

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall, 5
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fair strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more: 10
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang, or war-steed champing;
Trump nor pibroch summon here 15
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,

And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow. 20
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here;
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans, or squadrons stamping.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done; 25
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveille.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying: 30
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye 35
Here no bugles sound reveille.

(From Canto Third, Section xvi)

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest. 40
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper 45
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest, 50
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray, 55
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever! 60

EPILOGUE

Harp of the North, farewell! The hills
grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade de-
scending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights
her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert
wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain
lending, 65
And the wild breeze, thy wilder min-
strelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers
blending,
With distant echo from the fold and
lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum
of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel
Harp! 70
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble
sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's
long way,
Through secret woes the world has
never known, 75
When on the weary night dawned wearier
day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured
alone.
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress!
is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow
retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy
string! 80
'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of
fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic
wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged
dell;

And now the mountain breezes scarcely
bring 85
A wandering witch-note of the distant
spell —
And now, 'tis silent all! — Enchantress,
fare thee well!

BRIGNALL BANKS

(From Rokeby, 1812: Canto Third,
Section xvi ff.)

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton-hall, 5
Beneath the turrets high,
A maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily:
"O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green; 10
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen." —

"If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we 15
That dwell by dale and down.
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May." — 20
Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen.

"I read you, by your bugle-horn, 25
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn
To keep the king's greenwood." —
"A ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light; 30
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night." —
Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there, 35
To reign his Queen of May!

"With burnished brand and musketoon
 So gallantly you come,
 I read you for a bold dragoon,
 That lists the tuck of drum." — 40
 "I list no more the tuck of drum,
 No more the trumpet hear;
 But when the beetle sounds his hum,
 My comrades take the spear.
 And O, though Brignall banks be fair, 45
 And Greta woods be gay,
 Yet mickle must the maiden dare
 Woud reign my Queen of May!

"Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
 A nameless death I'll die; 50
 The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
 Were better mate than I!
 And when I'm with my comrades met
 Beneath the greenwood bough,
 What once we were we all forget, 55
 Nor think what we are now.
 Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen." 60

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

(1816)

"Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
 Why weep ye by the tide?
 I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
 And ye sall be his bride:
 And ye sall be his bride, ladie, 5
 Sae comely to be seen" —
 But aye she loot the tears down fa'
 For Jock of Hazeldean.
 "Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
 And dry that cheek so pale; 10
 Young Frank is chief of Errington
 And lord of Langley-dale;
 His step is first in peaceful ha',
 His sword in battle keen" —
 But aye she loot the tears down fa' 15
 For Jock of Hazeldean.

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
 Nor braid to bind your hair;

Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
 Nor palfrey fresh and fair; 20
 And you, the foremost o' them a',
 Shall ride our forest queen" —
 But aye she loot the tears down fa'
 For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was decked at morning-tide, 25
 The tapers glimmered fair;
 The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
 And dame and knight are there.
 They sought her baith by bower and ha';
 The ladie was not seen! 30
 She's o'er the Border, and awa'
 Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

PIBROCH OF DONUIL DHU

(1816)

Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
 Pibroch of Donuil,
 Wake thy wild voice anew,
 Summon Clan-Conuil.
 Come away, come away, 5
 Hark to the summons!
 Come in your war array,
 Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen and
 From mountain so rocky, 10
 The war-pipe and pennon
 Are at Inverlochy.
 Come every hill-plaid and
 True heart that wears one,
 Come every steel blade and 15
 Strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended the herd,
 The flock without shelter;
 Leave the corpse uninterred,
 The bride at the altar; 20
 Leave the deer, leave the steer,
 Leave nets and barges:
 Come with your fighting gear,
 Broadswords and targes.

Come as the winds come when 25
 Forests are rended;
 Come as the waves come when
 Navies are stranded:

Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster, 30
Chief, vassal, page, and groom,
Tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come;
See how they gather!
Wide waves the eagle plume, 35
Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
Forward each man set!
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
Knell for the onset! 40

WHY SITT'ST THOU BY THAT RUINED HALL

(*From The Antiquary, 1815-16:*
Chapter x)

"Why sitt'st thou by that ruined hall,
Thou agèd carle so stern and gray?
Dost thou its former pride recall,
Or ponder how it passed away?" —

"Know'st thou not me?" the Deep Voice
cried; 5

"So long enjoyed, so oft misused —
Alternate, in thy fickle pride,
Desired, neglected, and accused!

"Before my breath, like blazing flax,
Man and his marvels pass away! 10
And changing empires wane and wax,
Are founded, flourish, and decay.

"Redeem mine hours — the space is brief —
While in my glass the sand-grains
shiver,
And measureless thy joy or grief, 15
When Time and thou shalt part for-
ever!"

THE SUN UPON THE WIERDLAW HILL

(1817)

The sun upon the Wierdlaw Hill,
In Ettrick's vale, is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.

Yet not the landscape to mine eye 5
Bears those bright hues that once it
bore,
Though evening with her richest dye
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain
I see Tweed's silver current glide, 10
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruined pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the
tree —
Are they still such as once they were, 15
Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas! the warped and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye?
The harp of strained and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply? 20
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill.

PROUD MAISIE

(*From The Heart of Midlothian, 1818:*
Chapter XL)

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird, 5
When shall I marry me?" —
"When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?" — 10
"The gray-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady.
The owl from the steeple sing, 15
'Welcome, proud lady.'"

COUNTY GUY

(From Quentin Durward, 1823:

Chapter iv)

Ah, County Guy, the hour is nigh,
 The sun has left the lea,
 The orange flower perfumes the bower,
 The breeze is on the sea.
 The lark, his lay who thrilled all day, 5
 Sits hushed his partner nigh;
 Breeze, bird, and flower confess the hour,
 But where is County Guy?

The village maid steals through the shade,
 Her shepherd's suit to hear; 10
 To beauty shy, by lattice high,
 Sings high-born Cavalier.
 The star of Love, all stars above,
 Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
 And high and low the influence know — 15
 But where is County Guy?

BORDER SONG

(From The Monastery, 1819-20:

Chapter xxv)

March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
 Why the deil dinna ye march forward
 in order?

March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
 All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the
 border.

Many a banner spread, 5
 Flutters above your head,

Many a crest that is famous in story;
 Mount and make ready then,
 Sons of the mountain glen,

Fight for the Queen and our old Scot-
 tish glory. 10

Come from the hills where your hirsels
 are grazing,

Come from the glen of the buck and
 the roe;

Come to the crag where the beacon is
 blazing,

Come with the buckler, the lance, and
 the bow.

Trumpets are sounding, 15
 War-steeds are bounding,

Stand to your arms and march in good
 order;

England shall many a day

Tell of the bloody fray,

When the Blue Bonnets came over the
 Border. 20

GLEE FOR KING CHARLES

(From Woodstock, 1826: Chapter xx)

Bring the bowl which you boast,

Fill it up to the brim;

'Tis to him we love most,

And to all who love him. 5

Brave gallants, stand up,

And avaunt ye, base carles!

Were there death in the cup,

Here's a health to King Charles!

Though he wanders through dangers,

Unaided, unknown, 10

Dependent on strangers,

Estranged from his own;

Though 'tis under our breath,

Amidst forfeits and perils, 15

Here's to honor and faith,

And a health to King Charles!

Let such honors abound

As the time can afford,

The knee on the ground,

And the hand on the sword; 20

But the time shall come round

When, 'mid Lords, Dukes, and Earls,

The loud trumpet shall sound,

Here's a health to King Charles!

THE FORAY

(1830)

The last of our steers on the board has
 been spread,

And the last flask of wine in our goblet
 is red;

Up, up, my brave kinsmen! belt swords,
 and begone,

There are dangers to dare, and there's
 spoil to be won.

The eyes that so lately mixt glances with
ours 5

For a space must be dim, as they gaze
from the towers,

And strive to distinguish, through tempest
and gloom,

The prance of the steed and the toss of
the plume.

The rain is descending; the wind rises
loud;

And the moon her red beacon has veiled
with a cloud; 10

'Tis the better, my mates! for the warder's
dull eye

Shall in confidence slumber, nor dream we
are nigh.

Our steeds are impatient! I hear my
blithe gray!

There is life in his hoof-clang, and hope
in his neigh;

Like the flash of a meteor, the glance of
his mane 15

Shall marshal your march through the
darkness and rain.

The drawbridge has dropped, the bugle
has blown;

One pledge is to quaff yet—then mount
and begone!—

To their honor and peace, that shall rest
with the slain;

To their health and their glee, that see
Teviot again! 20

CHARLES WOLFE

(1791-1823)

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AT CORUNNA

(c. 1814)

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;

Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we
buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night, 5
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound
him, 10

But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that
was dead, 15
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow
bed,

And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread
o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow! 20

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's
gone,

And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid
him.

But half of our weary task was done 25
When the clock struck the hour for re-
tiring;

And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and
gory; 30

We carved not a line, and we raised not
a stone—
But we left him alone with his glory.

THOMAS MOORE

(1779-1852)

THE HARP THAT ONCE
THROUGH TARA'S HALLS

(From Irish Melodies, 1808-34)

The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul were fled.
So sleeps the pride of former days, 5
So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high for praise
Now feel that pulse no more!

No more to chiefs and ladies bright
The harp of Tara swells; 10
The chord alone that breaks at night
Its tale of ruin tells.
Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives
Is when some heart indignant breaks, 15
To show that still she lives.

THE TIME I'VE LOST IN WOOING

(From Irish Melodies)

The time I've lost in wooing,
In watching and pursuing
The light that lies
In woman's eyes,
Has been my heart's undoing. 5
Though Wisdom oft has sought me,
I scorned the lore she brought me:
My only books
Were woman's looks,
And folly's all they've taught me. 10

Her smile when Beauty granted,
I hung with gaze enchanted,
Like him, the Sprite,
Whom maids by night
Oft meet in glen that's haunted. 15

Like him, too, Beauty won me,
But while her eyes were on me;
If once their ray
Was turned away,
Oh, winds could not outrun me. 20

And are those follies going?
And is my proud heart growing
Too cold or wise
For brilliant eyes
Again to set it glowing? 25
No, vain, alas! th' endeavor
From bonds so sweet to sever;
Poor Wisdom's chance
Against a glance
Is now as weak as ever. 30

OFT, IN THE STILLY NIGHT

(1818)

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me;
The smiles, the tears, 5
Of boyhood years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimmed and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken! 10

Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all 15
The friends, so linked together,
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather;
I feel like one

Who treads alone 20
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!

Thus, in the stilly night, 25
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

(1788-1824)

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

(1808)

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted,
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold, 5
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow — 10
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.

Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame:
I hear thy name spoken, 15
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me — 20
Why wert thou so dear?

They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well: —
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met — 25
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.

If I should meet thee
After long years, 30
How should I greet thee? —
With silence and tears.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

(1814)

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light 5
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face; 10
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-
place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow, 15
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

(1815)

There's not a joy the world can give like
that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines
in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush
alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere
youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above
the wreck of happiness 5
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or
ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only
points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail
shall never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like
death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not
dream its own; 10
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the foun-
tain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis
where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips,
and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no
more their former hope of rest;

'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined
 turret wreath, 15
 All green and wildly fresh without, but
 worn and grey beneath.
 Oh could I feel as I have felt,—or be
 what I have been,
 Or weep as I could once have wept o'er
 many a vanished scene;
 As springs in deserts found seem sweet,
 all brackish though they be,
 So, midst the withered waste of life, those
 tears would flow to me. 20

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

(1816)

There be none of Beauty's daughters
 With a magic like thee;
 And like music on the waters
 Is thy sweet voice to me:
 When, as if its sound were causing 5
 The charmed ocean's pausing,
 The waves lie still and gleaming,
 And the lullèd winds seem dreaming;
 And the midnight moon is weaving
 Her bright chain o'er the deep; 10
 Whose breast is gently heaving,
 As an infant's asleep:
 So the spirit bows before thee,
 To listen and adore thee:
 With a full but soft emotion, 15
 Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CANTO THIRD

(1816)

"Afin que cette application vous forçât de penser à autre chose: il n'y a en vérité de remède que celui là et le temps."—*Lettre du Roi de Prusse à D'Alembert, Sept. 7, 1776.*

I

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair
 child,
 Ada, sole daughter of my house and
 heart?

When last I saw thy young blue eyes they
 smiled,
 And then we parted,—not as now we
 part,
 But with a hope.—

Awaking with a start, 5
 The waters heave around me, and on high
 The winds lift up their voices: I depart,
 Whither I know not; but the hour's gone
 by,
 When Albion's lessening shores could
 grieve or glad mine eye.

II

Once more upon the waters, yet once
 more! 10
 And the waves bound beneath me as a
 steed
 That knows his rider. Welcome to their
 roar!
 Swift be their guidance wheresoe'er it
 lead!
 Though the strained mast should quiver
 as a reed,
 And the rent canvass fluttering strew the
 gale, 15
 Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock on Ocean's foam to
sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tem-
pest's breath prevail.

III

In my youth's summer I did sing of one,
 The wandering outlaw of his own dark
 mind; ✓ 20
 Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
 And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
 Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I
 find
 The furrows of long thought, and dried-
 up tears,
 Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track be-
 hind, 25
 O'er which all heavily the journeying years
 Plod the last sands of life,—where not a
 flower appears.

IV

Since my young days of passion — joy, or
 pain,
 Perchance my heart and harp have lost a
 string,
 And both may jar; it may be that in
 vain 30
 I would essay as I have sung to sing.
 Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I
 cling,
 So that it wean me from the weary dream
 Of selfish grief or gladness — so it fling
 Forgetfulness around me — it shall
 seem 35
 To me, though to none else, a not un-
 grateful theme.

V

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
 In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of
 life,
 So that no wonder waits him; nor below
 Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition,
 strife, 40
 Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
 Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell
 Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves,
 yet rife
 With airy images, and shapes which dwell
 Still unimpaired, though old, in the soul's
 haunted cell. 45

VI

'Tis to create, and in creating live
 A being more intense, that we endow
 With form our fancy, gaining as we give
 The life we image, even as I do now.
 What am I? Nothing: but not so art
 thou, 50
 Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse
 earth,
 Invisible but gazing, as I glow
 Mixed with thy spirit, blended with thy
 birth,
 And feeling still with thee in my crushed
 feelings' dearth.

VII

Yet must I think less wildly: — I *have*
 thought 55
 Too long and darkly, till my brain be-
 came,
 In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
 A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
 And thus, untaught in youth my heart to
 tame,
 My springs of life were poisoned. 'Tis
 too late! 60
 Yet am I changed; though still enough
 the same
 In strength to bear what time can not
 abate,
 And feed on bitter fruits without accusing
 Fate.

VIII

Something too much of this: but now 'tis
 past,
 And the spell closes with its silent seal. 65
 Long absent HAROLD reappears at last, —
 He of the breast which fain no more would
 feel,
 Wrung with the wounds which kill not
 but ne'er heal;
 Yet Time, who changes all, had altered
 him
 In soul and aspect as in age: years steal 70
 Fire from the mind as vigor from the
 limb,
 And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near
 the brim.

IX

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he
 found
 The dregs were wormwood; but he filled
 again,
 And from a purer fount, on holier
 ground, 75
 And deemed its spring perpetual — but in
 vain!
 Still round him clung invisibly a chain
 Which galled for ever, fettering though
 unseen,
 And heavy though it clanked not; worn
 with pain,

Which pined although it spoke not, and
grew keen, 80
Entering with every step he took through
many a scene.

X

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mixed
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed
And sheathed with an invulnerable
mind, 85
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many
stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd
to find
Fit speculation, such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and
Nature's hand. 90

XI

But who can view the ripened rose nor
seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's
cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow
old?
Who can contemplate Fame through
clouds unfold 95
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor
climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex,
rolled
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's
fond prime.

XII

But soon he knew himself the most un-
fit 100
Of men to herd with Man, with whom
he held
Little in common;—untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul
was quelled

In youth by his own thoughts; still un-
compelled,
He would not yield dominion of his
mind 105
To spirits against whom his own rebelled;
Proud though in desolation; which could
find
A life within itself, to breathe without
mankind.

XIII

Where rose the mountains, there to him
were friends;
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his
home; 110
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, ex-
tends,
He had the passion and the power to
roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they
spake
A mutual language, clearer than the
tome 115
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft
forsake
For Nature's pages glassed by sunbeams
on the lake.

XIV

Like the Chaldean he could watch the
stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings
bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-
born jars, 120
And human frailties, were forgotten
quite.
Could he have kept his spirit to that
flight
He had been happy; but this clay will
sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the
link 125
That keeps us from yon heaven which
woos us to its brink.

XV

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
 Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
 Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
 To whom the boundless air alone were home. 130
 Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
 As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
 His breast and beak against his wiry dome
 Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
 Of his impeded soul would through his
 bosom eat. 135

XVI

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
 With nought of hope left, but with less
 of gloom;
 The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
 That all was over on this side the tomb,
 Had made Despair a smilingness assume, 140
 Which, though 'twere wild, — as on the
 plundered wreck
 When mariners would madly meet their
 doom
 With draughts intemperate on the sinking
 deck, —
 Did yet inspire a cheer which he forbore to
 check.

XVII

Stop! — for thy tread is on an Empire's
 dust! 145
 An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
 Is the spot marked with no colossal bust,
 Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
 None; but the moral's truth tells simpler
 so:
 As the ground was before, thus let it
 be; — 150
 How that red rain hath made the harvest
 grow!
 And is this all the world has gained by
 thee,
 Thou first and last of fields, king-making
 Victory?

XVIII

And Harold stands upon this place of
 skulls,
 The grave of France, the deadly Water-
 loo! 155
 How in an hour the power which gave
 annuls
 Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
 In "pride of place" here last the eagle
 flew,
 Then tore with bloody talon the rent
 plain,
 Pierced by the shaft of banded nations
 through; 160
 Ambition's life and labors all were vain:
 He wears the shattered links of the world's
 broken chain.

XIX

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
 And foam in fetters; — but is Earth more
 free?
 Did nations combat to make *One* sub-
 mit; 165
 Or league to teach all kings true sover-
 eignty?
 What! shall reviving Thralldom again be
 The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
 Shall we, who struck the Lion down,
 shall we
 Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly
 gaze 170
 And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove*
 before ye praise!

XX

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no
 more!
 In vain, fair cheeks were furrowed with
 hot tears
 For Europe's flowers long rooted up be-
 fore
 The trampler of her vineyards; in vain,
 years 175
 Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
 Have all been borne, and broken by the
 accord
 Of roused-up millions: all that most en-
 dears

Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a
sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens'
tyrant lord. 180

XXI

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered
then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and
brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and
when 185
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake
again,
And all went merry as a marriage-
bell;—
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like
a rising knell!

XXII

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the
wind, 190
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be uncon-
fined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and
Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying
feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in
once more 195
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's
opening roar!

XXIII

Within a windowed niche of that high
hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did
hear 200
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's pro-
phetic ear;

And when they smiled because he deemed
it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too
well
Which stretched his father on a bloody
bier, 205
And roused the vengeance blood alone
could quell:
He rushed into the field, and, foremost
fighting, fell.

XXIV

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and
fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of
distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour
ago 210
Blushed at the praise of their own love-
liness;
And there were sudden partings, such as
press
The life from out young hearts, and chok-
ing sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who
could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual
eyes, 215
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn
could rise!

XXV

And there was mounting in hot haste:
the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clatter-
ing car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous
speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of
war; 220
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning
star;
While thronged the citizens with terror
dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—"The
foe! They come! they come!" 225

XXVI

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose!
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
 Have heard, and heard too have her Saxon foes:—
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
 Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills 230
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
 With the fierce native daring which instills
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,
 And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!

XXVII

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves, 235
 Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow 240
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valor, rolling on the foe
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay, 245
 The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
 The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
 Battle's magnificently stern array!
 The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
 The earth is covered thick with other clay, 250

Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
 Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!

XXIX

Their praise is hymned by loftier harps than mine;
 Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
 Partly because they blend me with his line, 255
 And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
 And partly that bright names will hallow song;
 And his was of the bravest, and when showered
 The death-bolts deadliest the thinned files along,
 Even where the thickest of war's tempest lowered, 260
 They reached no nobler breast than thine,
 young, gallant Howard!

XXX

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
 And mine were nothing, had I such to give;
 But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
 Which living waves where thou didst cease to live, 265
 And saw around me the wide field revive
 With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
 Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
 With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
 I turned from all she brought to those she could not bring.

XXXI

I turned to thee, to thousands, of whom each
 And one as all a ghastly gap did make

In his own kind and kindred, whom to
teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must
awake 275
Those whom they thirst for; though the
sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honored but assumes a stronger, bit-
terer claim.

XXXII

They mourn, but smile at length; and,
smiling, mourn: 280
The tree will wither long before it
fall;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail
be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the
hall
In massy hoariness; the ruined wall
Stands when its wind-torn battlements
are gone; 285
The bars survive the captive they enthrall;
The day drags through though storms
keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly
live on:

XXXIII

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies; and
makes 290
A thousand images of one that was,
The same, and still the more, the more it
breaks;
And thus the heart will do which not for-
sakes,
Living in shattered guise; and still, and
cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow
aches, 295
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things
are untold.

XXXIV

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison, a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches: for
it were 300
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's
shore,
All ashes to the taste. Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er 305
Such hours 'gainst years of life,—say,
would he name threescore?

XXXV

The Psalmist numbered out the years of
man:
They are enough, and if thy tale be true,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that
fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Water-
loo! 310
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and
say —
“Here, where the sword united nations
drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that
day!”
And this is much, and all which will not
pass away. 315

XXXVI

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of
men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt:
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been
betwixt, 320
Thy throne had still been thine, or never
been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou
seek'st
Even now to reassume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer
of the scene!

XXXVII

Conqueror and captive of the earth art
 thou! 325
 She trembles at thee still, and thy wild
 name
 Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds
 than now
 That thou art nothing, save the jest of
 Fame,
 Who wooed thee once, thy vassal, and
 became
 The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou
 wert 330
 A god unto thyself; nor less the same
 To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
 Who deemed thee for a time whate'er thou
 didst assert.

XXXVIII

Oh, more or less than man—in high or
 low,
 Battling, with nations, flying from the
 field; 335
 Now making monarchs' necks thy foot-
 stool, now
 More than thy meanest soldier taught to
 yield:
 An empire thou couldst crush, command,
 rebuild,
 But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
 However deeply in men's spirits skilled, 340
 Look through thine own, nor curb the
 lust of war,
 Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the
 loftiest star.

XXXIX

Yet well thy soul hath brooked the turn-
 ing tide
 With that untaught innate philosophy,
 Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep
 pride, 345
 Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
 When the whole host of hatred stood
 hard by,
 To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou
 hast smiled
 With a sedate and all-enduring eye;

When Fortune fled her spoiled and favor-
 ite child, 350
 He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon
 him piled.

XL

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
 Ambition steeled thee on too far to show
 That just habitual scorn, which could
 contemn
 Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to
 feel, not so 355
 To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
 And spurn the instruments thou wert to
 use
 Till they were turned unto thine over-
 throw:
 'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose,
 So hath it proved to thee and all such lot
 who choose. 360

XLI

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
 Thou hadst been made to stand or fall
 alone,
 Such scorn of man had helped to brave
 the shock;
 But men's thoughts were the steps which
 paved thy throne,
 Their admiration thy best weapon
 shone; 365
 The part of Philip's son was thine, not
 then
 (Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
 Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
 For sceptred cynics earth were far too
 wide a den.

XLII

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell, 370
 And there hath been thy bane; there is a
 fire
 And motion of the soul which will not
 dwell
 In its own narrow being, but aspire
 Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
 And, but once kindled, quenchless ever-
 more, 375

Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever
bore.

XLIII

This makes the madmen who have made
men mad
By their contagion, — Conquerors and
Kings, 380
Founders of sects and systems, to whom
add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet
things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret
springs,
And are themselves the fools to those
they fool; 384
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a
school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to
shine or rule.

XLIV

Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at
last;
And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife, 390
That should their days, surviving perils
past,
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed which runs to
waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid
by, 395
Which eats into itself and rusts inglori-
ously.

XLV

He who ascends to mountain-tops shall
find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds
and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those be-
low. 400

Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean
spread,

Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those
summits led. 405

XLVI

Away with these! true Wisdom's world
will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature! for who teems like
thee,
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
There Harold gazes on a work divine, 410
A blending of all beauties, — streams and
dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, . wood, cornfield,
mountain, vine,
And chieffest castles breathing stern fare-
wells
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin
greenly dwells.

XLVII

And there they stand, as stands a lofty
mind, 415
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying wind,
Or holding dark communion with the
cloud.
There was a day when they were young
and proud:
Banners on high, and battles passed be-
low; 420
But they who fought are in a bloody
shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust
ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no
future blow.

XLVIII

Beneath these battlements, within those
walls,
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud
state 425

Each robber chief upheld his armèd halls,
 Doing his evil will, nor less elate
 Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
 What want these outlaws conquerors
 should have,
 But History's purchased page to call them
 great? 430
 A wider space, an ornamented grave?
 Their hopes were not less warm, their
 souls were full as brave.

XLIX

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
 What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!
 And Love, which lent a blazon to their
 shields 435
 With emblems well devised by amorous
 pride,
 Through all the mail of iron hearts would
 glide:
 But still their flame was fierceness, and
 drew on
 Keen contest and destruction near allied;
 And many a tower for some fair mischief
 won, 440
 Saw the discolored Rhine beneath its ruin
 run.

L

But Thou, exulting and abounding river!
 Making thy waves a blessing as they
 flow
 Through banks whose beauty would en-
 dure for ever,
 Could man but leave thy bright creation
 so, 445
 Nor its fair promise from the surface
 mow
 With the sharp scythe of conflict, — then
 to see
 Thy valley of sweet waters, were to
 know
 Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem
 even to me,
 Even now what wants thy stream? — that
 it should Lethe be. 450

LI

A thousand battles have assailed thy banks,
 But these and half their fame have passed
 away,
 And Slaughter heaped on high his welter-
 ing ranks;
 Their very graves are gone, and what are
 they?
 Thy tide washed down the blood of yester-
 day, 455
 And all was stainless, and on thy clear
 stream
 Glassed with its dancing light the sunny
 ray;
 But o'er the blackened memory's blight-
 ing dream
 Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping
 as they seem.

LII

Thus Harold inly said, and passed
 along, 460
 Yet not insensibly to all which here
 Awoke the jocund birds to early song
 In glens which might have made even
 exile dear.
 Though on his brow were graven lines
 austere,
 And tranquil sternness which had ta'en the
 place 465
 Of feelings fierier far but less severe,
 Joy was not always absent from his face,
 But o'er it in such scenes would steal with
 transient trace.

LIII

Nor was all love shut from him, though
 his days
 Of passion had consumed themselves to
 dust. 470
 It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
 On such as smile upon us; the heart must
 Leap kindly back to kindness, though dis-
 gust
 Hath weaned it from all wordlings: thus
 he felt,
 For there was soft remembrance, and
 sweet trust 475

In one fond breast to which his own would
melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom
dwelt.

LIV

And he had learned to love (I know not
why,
For this in such as him seems strange of
mood)
The helpless looks of blooming in-
fancy, 480

Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipped affections have
to grow, 485
In him this glowed when all beside had
ceased to glow.

LV

And there was one soft breast, as hath
been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and, though
unwed,
That love was pure, and, far above dis-
guise, 490
Had stood the test of mortal enmities
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign
shore
Well to that heart might his these absent
greetings pour! 495

I

The castled crag of Drachenfels
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine;
And hills all rich with blossomed trees, 500
And fields which promise corn and wine,
And scattered cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strewed a scene which I should see
With double joy wert *thou* with me. 505

2

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes
And hands which offer early flowers,
Walk smiling o'er this paradise;
Above, the frequent feudal towers
Through green leaves lift their walls of
gray; 510
And many a rock which steeply lowers,
And noble arch in proud decay,
Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers;
But one thing want these banks of
Rhine, —
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine! 515

3

I send the lilies given to me;
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must withered be;
But yet reject them not as such:
For I have cherished them as dear, 520
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine even here,
When thou behold'st them, drooping nigh,
And know'st them gathered by the Rhine,
And offered from my heart to thine! 525

4

The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round:
The haughtiest breast its wish might
bound 530
Through life to dwell delighted here;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To nature and to me so dear,
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of
Rhine! 535

LVI

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant
mound:
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
Our enemy's, — but let not that forbid 540
Honor to Marceau! o'er whose early
tomb
Tears, big tears, gushed from the rough
soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France whose rights he battled
to resume.

LVII

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young
career, — 545
His mourners were two hosts, his friends
and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;
For he was Freedom's champion, one of
those,
The few in number, who had not o'er-
stept 550
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons: he had
kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men
o'er him wept.

LVIII

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shattered
wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her
height 555
Yet shows of what she was, when shell
and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did
light, —
A tower of victory! from whence the
flight
Of baffled foes was watched along the
plain:
But Peace destroyed what War could
never blight, 560
And laid those proud roofs bare to Sum-
mer's rain,
On which the iron shower for years had
poured in vain.

LIX

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long de-
lighted
The stranger fain would linger on his
way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls
united 565
Or lonely Contemplation thus might
stray;
And could the ceaseless vulture cease to
prey

On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too
gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not aus-
tere, 570
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the
year.

LX

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like
thine;
The mind is colored by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign 575
Their cherished gaze upon thee, lovely
Rhine,
'Tis with the thankful glance of parting
praise;
More mighty spots may rise, more glaring
shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft, — the glories
of old days, 580

LXI

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,
The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls be-
tween,
The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets
been, 585
In mockery of man's art; and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Em-
pires near them fall.

LXII

But these recede. Above me are the
Alps, 590
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnaced in clouds their snowy
scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls

The avalanche—the thunderbolt of
snow! 595

All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet
leave vain man below.

LXIII

But ere these matchless heights I dare to
scan,

There is a spot should not be passed in
vain, — 600

Morat! the proud, the patriot field! where
man

May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquered on
that plain;

Here Burgundy bequeathed his tombless
host,

A bony heap, through ages to remain, 605
Themselves their monument;—the Sty-
gian coast

Unsepulchred they roamed, and shrieked
each wandering ghost.

LXIV

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage
vies,

Morat and Marathon twin names shall
stand;

They were true Glory's stainless vic-
tories, 610

Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,

All unbought champions in no princely
cause

Of vice-entailed Corruption; they no land
Doomed to bewail the blasphemy of
laws 615

Making kings' rights divine, by some Dra-
conic clause.

LXV

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days;

'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of
years,

And looks as with the wild-bewildered
gaze 620

Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it
stands

Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levelled Aventicum, hath strewed her sub-
ject lands. 625

LXVI

And there—oh! sweet and sacred be the
name! —

Julia, the daughter, the devoted, gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath
a claim

Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's
grave.

Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers
would crave 630

The life she lived in; but the judge was
just,

And then she died on him she could not
save.

Their tomb was simple, and without a
bust,

And held within their urn one mind, one
heart, one dust.

LXVII

But these are deeds which should not
pass away, 635

And names that must not wither, though
the earth

Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their
death and birth;

The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its
woe, 640

And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine
snow,

Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

LXVIII

Lake Lemman woos me with its crystal
face,

The mirror where the stars and mountains
view 645

The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height
and hue.

There is too much of man here, to look
through

With a fit mind the might which I be-
hold;

But soon in me shall Loneliness renew 650
Thoughts hid, but not less cherished than
of old,

Ere mingling with the herd had penned
me in their fold.

LXIX

To fly from, need not be to hate, man-
kind:

All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind 655

Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the
spoil

Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the
coil,

In wretched interchange of wrong for
wrong 660

Midst a contentious world, striving where
none are strong.

LXX

There, in a moment, we may plunge our
years

In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul turn all our blood to
tears,

And color things to come with hues of
Night; 665

The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the
sea,

The boldest steer but where their ports
invite,

But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and an-
chored ne'er shall be. 670

LXXI

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?

By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth
make 675

A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to
inflict or bear?

LXXII

I live not in myself, but I become 680
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the
hum

Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain, 685
Classed among creatures, when the soul
can flee,

And with the sky, the peak, the heaving
plain

Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in
vain.

LXXIII

And thus I am absorbed, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past, 690
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was
cast,

To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to
spring,

Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as
the blast 695

Which it would cope with, on delighted
wing,

Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round
our being cling.

LXXIV

And when at length the mind shall be
all free

From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall
be 700

Existent happier in the fly and worm,—

When elements to elements conform,
 And dust is as it should be, shall I not
 Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more
 warm?
 The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each
 spot? 705
 Of which, even now, I share at times the
 immortal lot?

LXXV

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies,
 a part
 Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
 Is not the love of these deep in my heart
 With a pure passion? should I not con-
 temn 710
 All objects, if compared with these? and
 stem
 A tide of suffering, rather than forego
 Such feelings for the hard and worldly
 phlegm
 Of those whose eyes are only turned be-
 low,
 Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts
 which dare not glow? 715

LXXVI

But this is not my theme; and I return
 To that which is immediate, and require
 Those who find contemplation in the urn,
 To look on One whose dust was once all
 fire,
 • A native of the land where I respire 720
 The clear air for a while (a passing guest,
 Where he became a being), whose desire
 Was to be glorious;—'twas a foolish
 quest,
 The which to gain and keep he sacrificed
 all rest.

LXXVII

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rous-
 seau, 725
 The apostle of affliction, he who threw
 Enchantment over passion, and from woe
 Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first
 drew
 The breath which made him wretched;
 yet he knew

How to make madness beautiful, and
 cast 730
 O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly
 hue
 Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they
 past
 The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feel-
 ingly and fast.

LXXVIII

His love was passion's essence — as a tree
 On fire by lightning; with ethereal
 flame 735
 Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
 Thus, and enamored, were in him the
 same.
 But his was not the love of living dame,
 Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
 But of ideal beauty, which became 740
 In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
 Along his burning page, distempered though
 it seems.

LXXIX

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
 Invested her with all that's wild and
 sweet;
 This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss 745
 Which every morn his fevered lip would
 greet
 From hers who but with friendship his
 would meet;
 But to that gentle touch, through brain
 and breast
 Flashed the thrilled spirit's love-devouring
 heat;
 In that absorbing sigh perchance more
 blest 750
 Than vulgar minds may be with all they
 seek possess.

LXXX

His life was •one long war with self-
 sought foes,
 Or friends by him self-banished; for his
 mind
 Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and
 chose,

For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind, 755
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange
and blind.

But he was phrensied, — wherefore, who
may know?

Since cause might be which skill could
never find;

But he was phrensied by disease or woe
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a
reasoning show. 760

LXXXI

For then he was inspired, and from him
came,

As from the Pythian's mystic cave of
yore,

Those oracles which set the world in
flame,

Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were
no more:

Did he not this for France, which lay be-
fore 765

Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years?

Broken and trembling to the yoke she
bore,

Till by the voice of him and his com-
peers

Roused up to too much wrath, which fol-
lows o'ergrown fears?

LXXXII

They made themselves a fearful monu-
ment! 770

The wreck of old opinions, things which
grew,

Breathed from the birth of time: the veil
they rent,

And what behind it lay, all earth shall
view.

But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to re-
build 775

Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same
hour refilled,

As heretofore, because ambition was self-
willed.

LXXXIII

But this will not endure, nor be endured;
Mankind have felt their strength, and
made it felt! 780

They might have used it better, but, al-
lured

By their new vigor, sternly have they
dealt

On one another; pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they

Who in oppression's darkness caved had
dwelt, 785

They were not eagles, nourished with the
day;

What marvel, then, at times if they mis-
took their prey?

LXXXIV

What deep wounds ever closed without
a scar?

The heart's bleed longest, and but heal
to wear

That which disfigures it; and they who
war 790

With their own hopes and have been van-
quished, bear

Silence, but not submission. In his lair
Fixed Passion holds his breath, until the

hour

Which shall atone for years; none need
despair:

It came, it cometh, and will come, — the
power 795 *

To punish or forgive — in *one* we shall be
slower.

LXXXV

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a
thing

Which warns me with its stillness to for-
sake

Earth's troubled waters for a purer
spring. 800

This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I
loved

Torn Ocean's roar, but thy soft murmur-
ing

Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice re-
proved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have
been so moved. 805

LXXXVI

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet
clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly
seen,
Save darkened Jura, whose capt heights
appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near, 810
There breathes a living fragrance from
the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on
the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended
oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night
carol more;—

LXXXVII

He is an evening reveller, who makes 815
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;—
At intervals, some bird from out the
brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the
hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews 820
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of
her hues.

LXXXVIII

Ye stars, which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read
the fate 825
Of men and empires,—'tis to be for-
given,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create 830

In us such love and reverence from afar
That fortune, fame, power, life, have
named themselves a star.

LXXXIX

All heaven and earth are still—though
not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling
most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too
deep:— 835
All heaven and earth are still. From
the high host
Of stars to the lulled lake and mountain-
coast,
All is concentrated in a life intense,
Where not a beam nor air nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense 840
Of that which is of all Creator and de-
fence.

XC

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude where we are *least* alone; ✓
A truth, which through our being then
doth melt
And purifies from self: it is a tone, 845
The soul and source of music, which
makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty;—'twould
disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial
power to harm. 850

XCI

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus
take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honor shrines are
weak 855
Upreared of human hands. Come, and
compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or
Greek,

With Nature's realms of worship, earth
and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe
thy prayer!

XCII

The sky is changed! — and such a change!
Oh night, 860
And storm, and darkness, ye are won-
drous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the
light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak the rattling crags
among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one
lone cloud, 865
But every mountain now hath found a
tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty
shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps who call to her
aloud!

XCIII

And this is in the night: — Most glorious
night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me
be 870
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric
sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the
earth!
And now again 'tis black, — and now, the
glee 875
Of the loud hills shakes with its moun-
tain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earth-
quake's birth.

XCIV

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his
way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have
parted
In hate, whose mining depths so inter-
vene 880

That they can meet no more, though
broken-hearted!
Though in their souls, which thus each
other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond
rage
Which blighted their life's bloom and then
departed —
Itself expired, but leaving them an age 885
Of years all winters, war within them-
selves to wage: —

XCV

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath
cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en
his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their
play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand
to hand, 890
Flashing and cast around. Of all the
band,
The brightest through these parted hills
hath forked
His lightnings, as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation worked,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever
therein lurked. 895

XCVI

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, light-
nings! ye,
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and
a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may
be
Things that have made me watchful; the
far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll 900
Of what in me is sleepless, — if I rest.
But where of ye, O tempests, is the
goal?
Are ye like those within the human
breast;
Or do ye find at length, like eagles, some
high nest?

XCVII

Could I embody and unbosom now 905
 That which is most within me, — could I
 wreak
 My thoughts upon expression, and thus
 throw
 Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong
 or weak,
 All that I would have sought, and all I
 seek,
 Bear, know, feel and yet breathe — into
 one word, 910
 And that one word were Lightning, I
 would speak;
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing
it as a sword.

XCVIII

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
 With breath all incense and with cheek
 all bloom, 915
 Laughing the clouds away with playful
 scorn,
 And living as if earth contained no
 tomb, —
 And glowing into day. We may resume
 The march of our existence; and thus I,
 Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find
 room 920
 And food for meditation, nor pass by
 Much that may give us pause if pondered
 fittingly.

XCIX

Clarens, sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep
 Love!
 Thine air is the young breath of pas-
 sionate thought,
 Thy trees take root in Love; the snows
 above, 925
 The very glaciers have his colors caught,
 And sunset into rose-hues sees them
 wrought
 By rays which sleep there lovingly: the
 rocks,
 The permanent crags, tell here of Love.
 who sought

In them a refuge from the worldly
 shocks,
 Which stir and sting the soul with hope
 that woos, then mocks.

C

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are
 trod, —
 Undying Love's, who here ascends a
 throne
 To which the steps are mountains; where
 the god
 Is a pervading life and light, — so
 shown 935
 Not on those summits solely, nor alone
 In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
 His eye is sparkling and his breath hath
 blown,
 His soft and summer breath, whose ten-
 der power
 Passes the strength of storms in their most
 desolate hour. 940

CI

All things are here of *him*; from the
 black pines
 Which are his shade on high, and the
 loud roar
 Of torrents where he listeneth, to the
 vines
 Which slope his green path downward to
 the shore,
 Where the bowed waters meet him, and
 adore, 945
 Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the
 wood, —
 The covert of old trees, with trunks all
 hoar,
 But light leaves, young as joy, — stands
 where it stood,
 Offering to him and his a populous soli-
 tude, —

CII

A populous solitude of bees and birds, 950
 And fairy-formed and many-colored
 things,

Who worship him with notes more sweet
 than words,
 And innocently open their glad wings,
 Fearless and full of life: the gush of
 springs,
 And fall of lofty fountains, and the
 bend 955
 Of stirring branches, and the bud which
 brings
 The swiftest thought of beauty, here ex-
 tend,
 Mingling, and made by Love, unto one
 mighty end.

CIII

He who hath loved not, here would learn
 that lore,
 And make his heart a spirit; he who
 knows 960
 That tender mystery, will love the more,
 For this is Love's recess, where vain men's
 woes
 And the world's waste have driven him
 far from those,
 For 'tis his nature to advance or die;
 He stands not still, but or decays or
 grows 965
 Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
 With the immortal lights in its eternity!

CIV

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this
 spot,
 Peopling it with affections; but he found
 It was the scene which passion must
 allot 970
 To the mind's purified beings; 'twas the
 ground
 Where early Love his Psyche's zone un-
 bound,
 And hallowed it with loveliness. 'Tis
 lone,
 And wonderful, and deep, and hath a
 sound,
 And sense, and sight of sweetness; here
 the Rhone 975
 Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps
 have reared a throne.

CV

Lausanne! and Ferney! ye have been the
 abodes
 Of names which unto you bequeathed a
 name;
 Mortals, who sought and found, by dan-
 gerous roads,
 A path to perpetuity of fame: 980
 They were gigantic minds, and their steep
 aim
 Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
 Thoughts which should call down thunder
 and the flame
 Of Heaven, again assailed, if Heaven the
 while
 On man and man's research could deign
 do more than smile. 985

CVI

The one was fire and fickleness, a child,
 Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
 A wit as various, — gay, grave, sage, or
 wild, —
 Historian, bard, philosopher, combined:
 He multiplied himself among mankind, 990
 The Proteus of their talents; but his own
 Breathed most in ridicule, — which, as
 the wind,
 Blew where it listed, laying all things
 prone, —
 Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to
 shake a throne.

CVII

The other, deep and slow, exhausting
 thought, 995
 And hiving wisdom with each studious
 year,
 In meditation dwelt, with learning
 wrought,
 And shaped his weapon with an edge
 severe,
 Sapping a solemn creed with solemn
 sneer;
 The lord of irony, — that master-
 spell, 1000
 Which stung his foes to wrath which grew
 from fear,

And doomed him to the zealot's ready
Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently
well.

CVIII

Yet, peace be with their ashes, for by
them,

If merited, the penalty is paid; 1005
It is not ours to judge, far less condemn:
The hour must come when such things
shall be made

Known unto all;—or hope and dread
allayed

By slumber, on one pillow,—in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie
decayed; 1010

And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'Twill be to be forgiven, or suffer what
is just.

CIX

But let me quit man's works again to
read

His Maker's, spread around me, and sus-
pend

This page, which from my reveries I
feed 1015

Until it seems prolonging without end.
The clouds above me to the white Alps
tend,

And I must pierce them, and survey what-
e'er

May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region,

where 1020

The earth to her embrace compels the
powers of air.

CX

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won
thee,

To the last halo of the chiefs and
sages 1025

Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of em-
pires: still

The fount, at which the panting mind
assuages

Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there
her fill,

Flows from the eternal source of Rome's
imperial hill. 1030

CXI

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renewed with no kind auspices—To feel
We are not what we have been, and to
deem

We are not what we should be, and to
steel

The heart against itself, and to con-
ceal, 1035

With a proud caution, love, or hate, or
aught,—

Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or
zeal,—

Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul—No matter,—it
is taught.

CXII

And for these words, thus woven into
song, 1040

It may be that they are a harmless wile,—
The coloring of the scenes which fleet
along,

Which I would seize, in passing, to be-
guile

My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth,—but I am
not 1045

So young as to regard men's frown or
smile

As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
I stood and stand alone,—remembered or
forgot.

CXIII

I have not loved the world, nor the world
me;

I have not flattered its rank breath, nor
bowed 1050

To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried
aloud

In worship of an echo; in the crowd
 They could not deem me one of such: I
 stood
 Among them, but not of them,—in a
 shroud 1055
 Of thoughts which were not their
 thoughts,—and still could,
 Had I not filed my mind, which thus it-
 self subdued.

CXIV

I have not loved the world, nor the world
 me,—
 But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
 Though I have found them not, that there
 may be 1060
 Words which are things, hopes which will
 not deceive,
 And virtues which are merciful nor weave
 Snares for the failing: I would also deem
 O'er others' griefs that some sincerely
 grieve;
 That two, or one, are almost what they
 seem, 1065
 That goodness is no name and happiness
 no dream.

CXV

My daughter! with thy name this song
 began—
 My daughter! with thy name thus much
 shall end—
 I see thee not, I hear thee not, but none
 Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the
 friend 1070
 To whom the shadows of far years extend:
 Albeit my brow thou never shouldst be-
 hold,
 My voice shall with thy future visions
 blend,
 And reach into thy heart,—when mine
 is cold,—
 A token and a tone even from thy father's
 mould. 1075

CXVI

To aid thy mind's development, to watch
 Thy dawn of little joys, to sit and see

Almost thy very growth, to view thee
 catch
 Knowledge of objects, wonders yet to
 thee!
 To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee, 1080
 And print on thy soft cheek a parent's
 kiss,—
 This, it should seem, was not reserved
 for me;
 Yet this was in my nature:—as it is,
 I know not what is there, yet something
 like to this.

CXVII

Yet, though dull hate as duty should be
 taught, 1085
 I know that thou wilt love me; though
 my name
 Should be shut from thee, as a spell still
 fraught
 With desolation, and a broken claim;
 Though the grave closed between us,—
 'twere the same,
 I know that thou wilt love me; though
 to drain 1090
 My blood from out thy being were an aim
 And an attainment, all would be in
 vain,—
 Still thou wouldst love me, still that more
 than life retain.

CXVIII

The child of love, though born in bitter-
 ness
 And nurtured in convulsion,—of thy
 sire 1095
 These were the elements, and thine no
 less.
 As yet such are around thee, but thy fire
 Shall be more tempered and thy hope far
 higher.
 Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the
 sea,
 And from the mountains where I now
 respire, 1100
 Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
 As, with a sigh, I deem thou mightst have
 been to me!

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

(1816)

My sister! my sweet sister! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be
thine.

Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:
Go where I will, to me thou art the
same — 5

A loved regret which I would not resign.
There yet are two things in my des-
tiny, —

A world to roam through, and a home
with thee.

The first were nothing — had I still the
last,

It were the haven of my happiness; 10
But other claims and other ties thou hast,
And mine is not the wish to make them
less.

A strange doom is thy father's son's, and
past

Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of
yore, — 15

He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlooked or unforeseen,
I have sustained my share of worldly
shocks, 20

The fault was mine; nor do I seek to
screen

My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

Mine were my faults, and mine be their
reward. 25

My whole life was a contest; since the
day

That gave me being, gave me that which
marred

The gift, — a fate, or will, that walked
astray;

And I at times have found the struggle
hard,

And thought of shaking off my bonds of
clay: 30

But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty
spray 35

Of my own years of trouble, which have
rolled

Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away:
Something — I know not what — does still
uphold

A spirit of slight patience; — not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase
pain. 40

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir
Within me — or perhaps a cold despair,
Brought on when ills habitually recur —
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air
(For even to this may change of soul
refer, 45

And with light armor we may learn to bear),
Have taught me a strange quiet, which
was not

The chief companion of a calmer lot.

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood: trees, and flowers,
and brooks, 50

Which do remember me of where I dwelt
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to
books,

Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks;
And even at moments I could think I
see 55

Some living thing to love — but none like
thee.

Here are the Alpine landscapes which
create

A fund for contemplation; — to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes
inspire: 60

Here to be lonely is not desolate,

For much I view which I could most de-
sire,
And, above all, a lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

Oh that thou wert but with me! — but I
grow 65

The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude which I have vaunted so
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may
show —

I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet 70
I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my altered eye.

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no
more.

Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake 75
The sweet remembrance of a dearer
shore:

Sad havoc Time must with my memory
make,

Ere *that* or *thou* can fade these eyes be-
fore;

Though, like all things which I have
loved, they are

Resigned for ever, or divided far. 80

The world is all before me! I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will
comply —

It is but in her summer's sun to bask,
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask, 85
And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall be
My sister — till I look again on thee.

I can reduce all feelings but this one;
And that I would not; — for at length
I see 90

Such scenes as those wherein my life
began,

The earliest — even the only paths for
me:

Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to
shun,

I had been better than I now can be;
The passions which have torn me would
have slept; 95
I had not suffered and *thou* hadst not
wept.

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with
Fame;

And yet they came unsought, and with
me grew,

And made me all which they can make
— a name. 100

Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.

But all is over — I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone be-
fore.

And for the future, this world's future
may 105

From me demand but little of my care;

I have outlived myself by many a day,
Having survived so many things that
were:

My years have been no slumber, but the
prey

Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share 110

Of life which might have filled a century,
Before its fourth in time had passed me
by.

And for the remnant which may be to
come,

I am content; and for the past I feel
Not thankless, — for within the crowded
sum 115

Of struggles, happiness at times would
steal;

And for the present, I would not benumb
My feelings further. — Nor shall I con-
ceal

That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought pro-
found. 120

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy
heart

I know myself secure, as thou in mine;

We were and are—I am, even as thou
art—

Beings who ne'er each other can resign:
It is the same, together or apart, 125
From life's commencement to its slow
decline

We are entwined—let death come slow
or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the
last!

SONNET ON CHILLON

(1816)

I

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can
bind;

And when thy sons to fetters are con-
signed— 5

To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless
gloom,

Their country conquers with 'their mar-
tyrdom,

And Freedom's fame finds wings on every
wind.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas
trod, 10

Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a
sod,

By Bonnivard! May none those marks
efface!

For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

A FABLE

(1816)

I

My hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears;

My limbs are bowed, though not with
toil, 5

But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and barred—forbidden
fare: 10

But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death.
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race 15
In darkness found a dwelling-place.

We were seven—who now are one:
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage: 20
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast, 25
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old:
There are seven columns, massy and
gray,

Dim with a dull imprisoned ray, 30
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left,—
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp. 35

And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain:
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away, 40
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er:
I lost their long and heavy score 45
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chained us each to a column stone,
 And we were three—yet, each alone:
 We could not move a single pace, 50
 We could not see each other's face,
 But with that pale and livid light
 That made us strangers in our sight.
 And thus together,—yet apart,
 Fettered in hand, but joined in heart, 55
 'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
 Of the pure elements of earth,
 To hearken to each other's speech,
 And each turn comforter to each
 With some new hope, or legend old, 60
 Or song heroically bold;
 But even these at length grew cold.
 Our voices took a dreary tone,
 An echo of the dungeon stone,
 A grating sound, not full and free, 65
 As they of yore were wont to be:
 It might be fancy, but to me
 They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest 70
 I ought to do—and did my best;
 And each did well in his degree.
 The youngest, whom my father loved,
 Because our mother's brow was given
 To him, with eyes as blue as heaven— 75
 For him my soul was sorely moved.
 And truly might it be distressed
 To see such bird in such a nest;
 For he was beautiful as day
 (When day was beautiful to me 80
 As to young eagles, being free)—
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer's gone,
 Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun: 85
 And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for nought but others' ills,
 And then they flowed like mountain rills,
 Unless he could assuage the woe 90
 Which he abhorred to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
 But formed to combat with his kind—
 Strong in his frame, and of a mood
 Which 'gainst the world in war had
 stood, 95
 And perished in the foremost rank
 With joy—but not in chains to pine.
 His spirit withered with their clank,
 I saw it silently decline—
 And so perchance in sooth did mine, 100
 But yet I forced it on to cheer
 Those relics of a home so dear.
 He was a hunter of the hills,
 Had followed there the deer and wolf;
 To him this dungeon was a gulf, 105
 And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls:
 A thousand feet in depth below,
 Its massy waters meet and flow;
 Thus much the fathom-line was sent 110
 From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
 Which, round about, the wave intralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave.
 Below the surface of the lake 115
 The dark vault lies wherein we lay:
 We heard it ripple night and day;
 Sounding o'er our heads it knocked;
 And I have felt the winter's spray
 Wash through the bars when winds were
 high 120
 And wanton in the happy sky;
 And then the very rock hath rocked,—
 And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
 Because I could have smiled to see
 The death that would have set me free. 125

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
 I said his mighty heart declined:
 He loathed and put away his food;
 It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
 For we were used to hunter's fare, 130
 And for the like had little care—

The milk drawn from the mountain goat
 Was changed for water from the moat,
 Our bread was such as captives' tears
 Have moistened many a thousand years, 135
 Since man first pent his fellow men
 Like brutes within an iron den:
 But what were these to us or him?
 These wasted not his heart or limb;
 My brother's soul was of that mould 140
 Which in a palace had grown cold,
 Had his free breathing been denied
 The range of the steep mountain's side.
 But why delay the truth?—he died.
 I saw, and could not hold his head, 145
 Nor reach his dying hand,—nor dead:
 Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
 To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
 He died—and they unlocked his chain,
 And scooped for him a shallow grave 150
 Even from the cold earth of our cave.
 I begged them, as a boon, to lay
 His corse in dust whereon the day
 Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
 But then within my brain it wrought, 155
 That even in death his freeborn breast
 In such a dungeon could not rest.
 I might have spared my idle prayer—
 They coldly laughed, and laid him there:
 The flat and turfless earth above 160
 The being we so much did love;
 His empty chain above it leant,
 Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favorite and the flower,
 Most cherished since his natal hour, 165
 His mother's image in fair face,
 The infant love of all his race,
 His martyred father's dearest thought,
 My latest care, for whom I sought
 To hoard my life, that his might be 170
 Less wretched now, and one day free,—
 He, too, who yet had held untired
 A spirit natural or inspired—
 He, too, was struck, and day by day
 Was withered on the stalk away. 175
 Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
 To see the human soul take wing

In any shape, in any mood:
 I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
 I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180
 Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
 I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
 Of Sin delirious with its dread:
 But these were horrors—this was woe
 Unmixed with such,—but sure and slow.
 He faded, and so calm and meek, 186
 So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
 So tearless, yet so tender,—kind,
 And grieved for those he left behind;
 With all the while a cheek whose bloom
 Was as a mockery of the tomb 191
 Whose tints as gently sunk away
 As a departing rainbow's ray;
 An eye of most transparent light,
 That almost made the dungeon bright, 195
 And not a word of murmur, not
 A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
 A little talk of better days,
 A little hope my own to raise,
 For I was sunk in silence—lost 200
 In this last loss, of all the most.
 And then the sighs he would suppress
 Of fainting nature's feebleness,
 More slowly drawn, grew less and less.
 I listened, but I could not hear— 205
 I called, for I was wild with fear:
 I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
 Would not be thus admonishèd:
 I called, and thought I heard a sound—
 I burst my chain with one strong bound,
 And rushed to him:—I found him not. 211
 I only stirred in this black spot,
 I only lived, I only drew
 The accursèd breath of dungeon-dew:
 The last, the sole, the dearest link 215
 Between me and the eternal brink,
 Which bound me to my failing race,
 Was broken in this fatal place.
 One on the earth, and one beneath—
 My brothers—both had ceased to breathe.
 I took that hand which lay so still, 221
 Alas! my own was full as chill;
 I had not strength to stir, or strive,
 But felt that I was still alive—
 A frantic feeling, when we know 225
 That what we love shall ne'er be so.

I know not why
 I could not die,
 I had no earthly hope — but faith,
 And that forbade a selfish death. 230

IX

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well — I never knew;
 First came the loss of light, and air, —
 And then of darkness too.
 I had no thought, no feeling — none: 235
 Among the stones I stood a stone,
 And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
 As shrubless crags within the mist;
 For all was blank, and bleak, and gray:
 It was not night, it was not day; 240
 It was not even the dungeon-light,
 So hateful to my heavy sight;
 But vacancy absorbing space,
 And fixedness without a place.
 There were no stars, no earth, no time, 245
 No check, no change, no good, no crime, —
 But silence, and a stirless breath
 Which neither was of life nor death:
 A sea of stagnant idleness,
 Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless! 250

X

A light broke in upon my brain, —
 It was the carol of a bird;
 It ceased, and then it came again,
 The sweetest song ear ever heard;
 And mine was thankful, till my eyes 255
 Ran over with the glad surprise,
 And they that moment could not see
 I was the mate of misery.
 But then by dull degrees came back
 My senses to their wonted track: 260
 I saw the dungeon walls and floor
 Close slowly round me as before;
 I saw the glimmer of the sun
 Creeping as it before had done.
 But through the crevice where it came 265
 That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
 And tamer than upon the tree;
 A lovely bird, with azure wings,
 And song that said a thousand things,

And seemed to say them all for me! 270
 I never saw its like before,
 I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
 It seemed like me to want a mate,
 But was not half so desolate,
 And it was come to love me when 275
 None lived to love me so again,
 And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
 Had brought me back to feel and think.
 I know not if it late were free,
 Or broke its cage to perch on mine, 280
 But knowing well captivity,
 Sweet bird! I could not wish for
 thine!
 Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
 A visitant from Paradise;
 For — Heaven forgive that thought! the 285
 while
 Which made me both to weep and smile —
 I sometimes deemed that it might be
 My brother's soul come down to me;
 But then at last away it flew,
 And then 'twas mortal, well I knew, 290
 For he would never thus have flown,
 And left me twice so doubly lone, —
 Lone — as the corse within its shroud,
 Lone — as a solitary cloud,
 A single cloud on a sunny day, 295
 While all the rest of heaven is clear,
 A frown upon the atmosphere,
 That hath no business to appear
 When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate, 300
 My keepers grew compassionate:
 I know not what had made them so,
 They were inured to sights of woe,
 But so it was — My broken chain
 With links unfastened did remain, 305
 And it was liberty to stride
 Along my cell from side to side,
 And up and down, and then athwart,
 And tread it over every part;
 And round the pillars one by one, 310
 Returning where my walk begun,
 Avoiding only, as I trod,
 My brothers' graves without a sod;

For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed, 315
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall:
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all 320
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me.
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery; 325
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad.
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high, 330
The quiet of a loving eye.

I saw them, and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high — their wide long lake below, 335
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow.
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channelled rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down. 340
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,

The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor, 345
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers
growing,
Of gentle breath and hue. 350

The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly; 355
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled — and would fain

I had not left my recent chain.
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode 360
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save, —
And yet my glance, too much oppress,
Had almost need of such a rest. 365

XIII

It might be months, or years, or days —
I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote —
At last men came to set me free; 370
I asked not why, and recked not where:
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last, 375
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage — and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home. 380
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place, 385
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell.
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends 390
To make us what we are: — even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

PROMETHEUS

(1816)

Titan! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise —
What was thy pity's recompense? 5
A silent suffering, and intense;

The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
 All that the proud can feel of pain,
 The agony they do not show,
 The suffocating sense of woe, 10
 Which speaks but in its loneliness,
 And then is jealous lest the sky
 Should have a listener, nor with sigh
 Until its voice is echoless.

Titan! to thee the strife was given 15
 Between the suffering and the will,
 Which torture where they cannot kill;
 And the inexorable Heaven,
 And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
 The ruling principle of Hate, 20
 Which for its pleasure doth create
 The things it may annihilate,
 Refused thee even the boon to die:
 The wretched gift eternity
 Was thine — and thou hast borne it well. 25
 All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
 Was but the menace which flung back
 On him the torments of thy rack —
 The fate thou didst so well foresee,
 But would not to appease him tell: 30
 And in thy silence was his sentence,
 And in his soul a vain repentance,
 And evil dread so ill dissembled,
 That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind, 35
 To render with thy precepts less
 The sum of human wretchedness,
 And strengthen Man with his own mind.
 But baffled as thou wert from high,
 Still in thy patient energy, 40
 In the endurance and repulse
 Of thine impenetrable spirit,
 Which Earth and Heaven could not con-
 vulse,
 A mighty lesson we inherit.
 Thou art a symbol and a sign 45
 To Mortals of their fate and force:
 Like thee, Man is in part divine,
 A troubled stream from a pure source;
 And Man in portions can foresee
 His own funereal destiny — 50
 His wretchedness, and his resistance,

And his sad unallied existence:
 To which his spirit may oppose
 Itself — and equal to all woes,
 And a firm will, and a deep sense,
 Which even in torture can descry
 Its own concentrated recompense,
 Triumphant where it dare defy,
 And making Death a Victory.

DARKNESS

(1816)

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
 The bright sun was extinguished, and the
 stars
 Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
 Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
 Swung blind and blackening in the moon-
 less air. 5
 Morn came and went — and came, and
 brought no day,
 And men forgot their passions in the dread
 Of this their desolation; and all hearts
 Were chilled into a selfish prayer for
 light.
 And they did live by watchfires: — and the
 thrones, 10
 The palaces of crownèd kings — the huts,
 The habitations of all things which dwell,
 Were burnt for beacons; cities were con-
 sumed,
 And men were gathered round their blaz-
 ing homes
 To look once more into each other's
 face. 15
 Happy were those who dwelt within the
 eye
 Of the volcanoes, and their mountain-
 torch;
 A fearful hope was all the world con-
 tained;
 Forests were set on fire — but hour by
 hour
 They fell and faded — and the crackling
 trunks 20
 Extinguished with a crash — and all was
 black.
 The brows of men by the despairing light

Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
 The flashes fell upon them: some lay
 down
 And hid their eyes and wept; and some did
 rest 25
 Their chins upon their clenched hands, and
 smiled;
 And others hurried to and fro, and fed
 Their funeral piles with fuel, and looked
 up
 With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
 The pall of a past world; and then again 30
 With curses cast them down upon the
 dust,
 And gnashed their teeth and howled. The
 wild birds shrieked
 And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
 And flap their useless wings; the wildest
 brutes
 Came tame and tremulous; and vipers
 crawled 35
 And twined themselves among the multi-
 tude,
 Hissing, but stingless — they were slain
 for food!
 And War, which for a moment was no
 more,
 Did glut himself again: — a meal was
 bought
 With blood, and each sate sullenly apart 40
 Gorging himself in gloom: no love was
 left;
 All earth was but one thought — and that
 was death
 Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
 Of famine fed upon all entrails — men
 Died, and their bones were tombless as
 their flesh; 45
 The meagre by the meagre were devoured.
 Even dogs assailed their masters, — all
 save one,
 And he was faithful to a corse, and
 kept
 The birds and beasts and famished men at
 bay,
 Till hunger clung them, or the dropping
 dead 50
 Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out
 no food,

But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
 And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
 Which answered not with a caress — he
 died.
 The crowd was famished by degrees; but
 two 55
 Of an enormous city did survive,
 And they were enemies. They met beside
 The dying embers of an altar-place,
 Where had been heaped a mass of holy
 things
 For an unholy usage; they raked up 60
 And, shivering, scraped with their cold
 skeleton hands
 The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
 Blew for a little life, and made a flame
 Which was a mockery. Then they lifted
 up
 Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld 65
 Each other's aspects — saw, and shrieked,
 and died —
 Even of their mutual hideousness they
 died,
 Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
 Famine had written Fiend. The world
 was void,
 The populous and the powerful was a
 lump, 70
 Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, life-
 less —
 A lump of death — a chaos of hard clay.
 The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood
 still,
 And nothing stirred within their silent
 depths;
 Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea, 75
 And their masts fell down piecemeal: as
 they dropped,
 They slept on the abyss without a surge —
 The waves were dead; the tides were in
 their grave,
 The moon, their mistress, had expired
 before.
 The winds were withered in the stagnant
 air, 80
 And the clouds perished: Darkness had no
 need
 Of aid from them — She was the Uni-
 verse.

MANFRED

A DRAMATIC POEM

(1816-17)

"There are more things in heaven and earth,
Hic et nunc,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MANFRED	WITCH OF THE ALPS
CHAMOIS HUNTER	ARIMANES
ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE	NEMESIS
MANUEL	THE DESTINIES
HERMAN	SPIRITS, &c.

*The Scene of the Drama is amongst the
Higher Alps—partly in the Castle of
Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.*

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

MANFRED *alone*.—*Scene, a Gothic Gallery.—Time, Midnight.*

Man. The lamp must be replenished, but
even then

It will not burn so long as I must watch.
My slumbers—if I slumber—are not
sleep,

But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not: in my heart 5
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.
But grief should be the instructor of the
wise;

Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the
most 10

Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal
truth,

The Tree of Knowledge is not that of
Life.

Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
I have essayed, and in my mind there is 15
A power to make these subject to itself—
But they avail not: I have done men good,
And I have met with good even among
men—

But this availed not: I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many fallen before
me — 20

But this availed not:— Good, or evil, life,
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no
dread,

And feel the curse to have no natural
fear, 25

Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes
or wishes,

Or lurking love of something on the earth.
Now to my task.—

Mysterious Agency!

Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe,
Whom I have sought in darkness and in
light! 30

Ye, who do compass earth about, and
dwell

In subtler essence—ye, to whom the tops
Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
And earth's and ocean's caves familiar
things—

I call upon ye by the written charm 35
Which gives me power upon you— Rise!
appear! [A pause.

They come not yet.— Now by the voice of
him

Who is the first among you; by this sign,
Which makes you tremble; by the claims
of him

Who is undying— Rise! appear!— Ap-
pear! [A pause. 40

If it be so— Spirits of earth and air,
Ye shall not thus elude me: by a power,
Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
Which had its birthplace in a star con-
demned, 44

The burning wreck of a demolished world,
A wandering hell in the eternal space;

By the strong curse which is upon my
soul,

The thought which is within me and
around me,

I do compel ye to my will— Appear!

[A star is seen at the darker end of
the gallery: it is stationary; and a voice is
heard singing.

FIRST SPIRIT

Mortal! to thy bidding bowed, 50
 From my mansion in the cloud,
 Which the breath of twilight builds,
 And the summer's sunset gilds
 With the azure and vermilion
 Which is mixed for my pavilion; 55
 Though thy quest may be forbidden,
 On a star-beam I have ridden:
 To thine adjuration bowed,
 Mortal — be thy wish avowed!

SECOND SPIRIT

Mont Blanc is the monarch of moun-
tains; *S. P. 107.* 60
 They crowned him long ago
 On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
 With a diadem of snow.
 Around his waist are forests braced,
 The avalanche in his hand; 65
 But ere it fall, that thundering ball
 Must pause for my command.
 The glacier's cold and restless mass
 Moves onward day by day;
 But I am he who bids it pass, 70
 Or with its ice delay.
 I am the spirit of the place,
 Could make the mountain bow
 And quiver to his caverned base —
 And what with me wouldst *Thou*? 75

THIRD SPIRIT

In the blue depth of the waters,
 Where the wave hath no strife,
 Where the wind is a stranger,
 And the sea-snake hath life,
 Where the mermaid is decking 80
 Her green hair with shells, —
Like the storm on the surface
Came the sound of thy spells;
 O'er my calm Hall of Coral
 The deep echo rolled — 85
 To the Spirit of Ocean
 Thy wishes unfold!

FOURTH SPIRIT

Where the slumbering earthquake
 Lies pillowed on fire,

And the lakes of bitumen 90
 Rise boilingly higher;
 Where the roots of the Andes
 Strike deep in the earth,
 As their summits to heaven
 Shoot soaringly forth; 95
 I have quitted my birthplace,
 Thy bidding to bide —
 Thy spell hath subdued me,
 Thy will be my guide!

FIFTH SPIRIT

I am the rider of the wind, 100
 The stirrer of the storm;
 The hurricane I left behind
 Is yet with lightning warm;
 To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
 I swept upon the blast: 105
 The fleet I met sailed well, and yet
 'Twill sink ere night be past.

SIXTH SPIRIT

My dwelling is the shadow of the night:
 Why doth thy magic torture me with
 light?

SEVENTH SPIRIT

The star which rules thy destiny 110
 Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
 It was a world as fresh and fair
 As e'er revolved round sun in air;
 Its course was free and regular,
 Space bosomed not a lovelier star. 115
 The hour arrived — and it became
 A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
 A pathless comet, and a curse,
 The menace of the universe;
 Still rolling on with innate force, 120
 Without a sphere, without a course,
 A bright deformity on high,
 The monster of the upper sky!
 And thou! beneath its influence born —
 Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn — 125
 Forced by a power (which is not thine,
 And lent thee but to make thee mine)
 For this brief moment to descend,
 Where these weak spirits round thee bend

And parley with a thing like thee — 130
What wouldst thou, Child of Clay, with
me?

The SEVEN SPIRITS

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds,
thy star,
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of
Clay!

Before thee at thy quest their spirits
are —

What wouldst thou with us, son of
mortals — say? 135

Man. Forgetfulness —

First Spirit. Of what — of whom —
and why?

Man. Of that which is within me;
read it there —

Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

Spirit. We can but give thee that which
we possess:

Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the
power 140

O'er earth — the whole, or portion — or a
sign

Which shall control the elements, where-
of

We are the dominators, — each and all,
These shall be thine.

Man. Oblivion, self-oblivion —
Can ye not wring, from out the hidden
realms 145

Ye offer so profusely, what I ask?

Spirit. It is not in our essence, in our
skill;

But — thou may'st die.

Man. Will death bestow it on me?

Spirit. We are immortal, and do not
forget;

We are eternal, and to us the past 150
Is, as the future, present. Art thou
answered?

Man. Ye mock me — but the power
which brought ye here

Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not
at my will!

The mind, the spirit, the Promethean
spark,

The lightning of my being, is as bright, 155
Pervading, and far darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though
cooped in clay!

Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

Spirit. We answer as we answered:
our reply

Is even in thine own words.

Man. Why say ye so? 160

Spirit. If, as thou say'st, thine essence
be as ours,

We have replied in telling thee the thing
Mortals call death hath nought to do
with us.

Man. I then have called ye from your
realms in vain;

Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

Spirit. Say; 165

What we possess we offer; it is thine:
Bethink ere thou dismiss us; ask again;
Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and
length of days —

Man. Accursèd! what have I to do
with days?

They are too long already. — Hence — be-
gone! 170

Spirit. Yet pause: being here, our will
would do thee service;

Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
Which we can make not worthless in
thine eyes?

Man. No, none: yet stay — one mo-
ment, ere we part,

I would behold ye face to face. I hear 175
Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,
As music on the waters; and I see

The steady aspect of a clear large star;
But nothing more. Approach me as ye
are,

Or one, or all, in your accustomed
forms. 180

Spirit. We have no forms, beyond the
elements

Of which we are the mind and principle:
But choose a form — in that we will ap-
pear.

Man. I have no choice; there is no
form on earth

Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him, 185

Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect

As unto him may seem most fitting—
Come!

Seventh Spirit (appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure). Behold!

Man. Oh God! if it be thus, and thou
Art not a madness and a mockery,
I yet might be most happy: I will clasp
thee, 190

And we again will be—

[*The figure vanishes.*

My heart is crushed!

[*MANFRED falls senseless.*

(*A Voice is heard in the incantation which follows.*)

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,

And the wisp on the morass; 195

When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still

In the shadow of the hill;

Shall my soul be upon thine 200

With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not
banish; 205

By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell 210
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been; 215
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turned around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel 220
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare; 225

In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun, 230
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring; 235
From thy own smile I snatched the snake,
For there it coiled as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known, 240
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy; 245
By the perfection of thine art
Which passed for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in other's pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel 250
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial:
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny,— 255
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together 260
Hath the word been passed — now wither!

SCENE II

The Mountain of the Jungfrau.—Time, Morning.—MANFRED alone upon the Cliffs.

Man. The spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,

The remedy I recked of tortured me:
I lean no more on superhuman aid; 265
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulfed in dark-
ness,

It is not of my search.—My Mother
Earth!

And thou fresh breaking Day, and you,
ye Mountains,

Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love
ye. 270

And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all

Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my
heart.

And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme
edge

I stand, and on the torrent's brink be-
neath 275

Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance—when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would
bring

My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever, wherefore do I
pause? 280

I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge;
I see the peril—yet do not recede;

And my brain reels—and yet my foot is
firm.

There is a power upon me which with-
holds,

And makes it my fatality to live,— 285
If it be life to wear within myself

This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre, for I have
ceased

To justify my deeds unto myself—
The last infirmity of evil. Ay, 290

Thou wingèd and cloud-cleaving minister,
[*An eagle passes.*

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I
should be

Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou
art gone

Where the eye cannot follow thee; but
thine 295

Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,

With a pervading vision.—Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sover-
eigns, we, 300

Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mixed essence
make

A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty
will, 305

Till our mortality predominates,
And men are—what they name not to
themselves,

And trust not to each other. Hark! the
note,

[*The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is
heard*].

The natural music of the mountain reed
(For here the patriarchal days are not 310
A pastoral fable) pipes in the liberal air,
Mixed with the sweet bells of the saun-
tering herd;

My soul would drink those echoes. Oh,
that I were

The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony, 315
A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying
With the blest tone which made me!

Enter from below a CHAMOIS HUNTER.
Chamois Hunter. Even so

This way the chamois leapt: her nimble
feet

Have baffled me; my gains today will
scarce

Repay my break-neck travail.—What is
here? 320

Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath
reached

A height which none even of our moun-
taineers,

Save our best hunters, may attain: his
garb

Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this
distance: 325

I will approach him nearer.

Man. (not perceiving the other). To be thus —

Gray-haired with anguish, like these
blasted pines,

Wrecks of a single winter, barkless,
branchless,

A blighted trunk upon a cursèd root,
Which but supplies a feeling to de-
cay — 330

And to be thus, eternally but thus,
Having been otherwise! Now furrowed
o'er

With wrinkles, ploughed by moments, —
not by years, —

And hours, all tortured into ages — hours
Which I outlive! — Ye toppling crags of
ice! 335

Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws
down

In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and
crush me!

I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye
pass,

And only fall on things that still would
live; 340

On the young flourishing forest, or the
hut

And hamlet of the harmless villager.

C. Hun. The mists begin to rise from
up the valley;

I'll warn him to descend, or he may
chance

To lose at once his way and life to-
gether. 345

Man. The mists boil up around the
glaciers; clouds

Rise curling fast beneath me, white and
sulphury,

Like foam from the roused ocean of deep
Hell,

Whose every wave breaks on a living
shore,

Heaped with the damned like pebbles. —
I am giddy. 350

C. Hun. I must approach him cau-
tiously; if near,

A sudden step will startle him, and he
Seems tottering already.

Man. Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with
the shock

Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling
up 355

The ripe green valleys with destruction's
splinters;

Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crushed the waters into mist and
made

Their fountains find another channel —
thus,

Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosen-
berg — 360

Why stood I not beneath it?

C. Hun. Friend! have a care,
Your next step may be fatal! — for the
love

Of him who made you, stand not on that
brink!

Man. (not hearing him). Such would
have been for me a fitting tomb;

My bones had then been quiet in their
depth; 365

They had not then been strewn upon the
rocks

For the wind's pastime — as thus — thus
they shall be —

In this one plunge. — Farewell, ye open-
ing heavens!

Look not upon me thus reproachfully —
You were not meant for me — Earth!
take these atoms! 370

[*As MANFRED is in act to spring from the
cliff, the CHAMOIS HUNTER seizes and
retains him with a sudden grasp.*]

C. Hun. Hold, madman! — though
aware of thy life,

Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty
blood:

Away with me — I will not quit my hold.

Man. I am most sick at heart — nay,
grasp me not —

I am all feebleness — the mountains
whirl 375

Spinning around me — I grow blind —
What art thou?

C. Hun. I'll answer that anon. — Away
with me!

The clouds grow thicker — there — now
 lean on me —
 Place your foot here — Here, take this
 staff, and cling
 A moment to that shrub — now give me
 your hand, 380
 And hold fast by my girdle — softly —
 well —
 The Chalet will be gained within an hour.
 Come on, we'll quickly find a surer foot-
 ing,
 And something like a pathway, which the
 torrent
 Hath washed since winter. — Come, 'tis
 bravely done: 385
 You should have been a hunter. — Follow
 me.
*[As they descend the rocks with difficulty,
 the scene closes.]*

ACT SECOND

SCENE I

A Cottage amongst the Bernese Alps.

MANFRED and the CHAMOIS HUNTER.

C. Hun. No, no — yet pause, thou must
 not yet go forth:
 Thy mind and body are alike unfit
 To trust each other, for some hours, at
 least;
 When thou art better, I will be thy
 guide —
 But whither?
Man. It imports not: I do know 5
 My route full well, and need no further
 guidance.
C. Hun. Thy garb and gait bespeak
 thee of high lineage —
 One of the many chiefs, whose castled
 crags
 Look o'er the lower valleys — which of
 these
 May call thee lord? I only know their
 portals; 10
 My way of life leads me but rarely down
 To bask by the huge hearths of those old
 halls,

Carousing with the vassals; but the paths,
 Which step from out our mountains to
 their doors,

I know from childhood; — which of these
 is thine? 15

Man. No matter.

C. Hun. Well, sir, pardon me the
 question,

And be of better cheer. Come, taste my
 wine;

'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day
 'T has thawed my veins among our
 glaciers: now

Let it do thus for thine. Come, pledge
 me fairly. 20

Man. Away, away! there's blood upon
 the brim!

Will it then never — never sink in the
 earth?

C. Hun. What dost thou mean? thy
 senses wander from thee.

Man. I say 'tis blood — my blood! the
 pure warm stream

Which ran in the veins of my fathers, —
 and in ours 25

When we were in our youth, and had one
 heart,

And loved each other as we should not
 love,

And this was shed: but still it rises up,
 Coloring the clouds, that shut me out from
 heaven,

Where thou art not — and I shall never
 be. 30

C. Hun. Man of strange words, and
 some half-maddening sin,

Which makes thee people vacancy, what-
 e'er

Thy dread and sufferance be, there's com-
 fort yet —

The aid of holy men, and heavenly
 patience —

Man. Patience and patience! Hence
 — that word was made 35

For brutes of burthen, not for birds of
 prey;

Preach it to mortals or a dust like thine, —
 I am not of thine order.

C. Hun. Thanks to heaven!

I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine
ill, 40

It must be borne, and these wild starts
are useless.

Man. Do I not bear it?—Look on
me—I live.

C. Hun. This is convulsion, and no
healthful life.

Man. I tell thee, man! I have lived
many years,
Many long years, but they are nothing
now 45

To those which I must number: ages—
ages—

Space and eternity—and consciousness.
With the fierce thirst of death—and still
unslaked!

C. Hun. Why, on thy brow the seal of
middle age

Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder
far. 50

Man. Think'st thou existence doth de-
pend on time?

It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperish-
able,

Endless, and all alike, as sands on the
shore.

Innumerable atoms; and one desert, 55
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves
break,

But nothing rests, save carcasses and
wrecks,

Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitter-
ness.

C. Hun. Alas! he's mad—but yet I
must not leave him.

Man. I would I were—for then the
things I see 60

Would be but a distempered dream.

C. Hun. What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st
upon?

Man. Myself, and thee—a peasant of
the Alps—

Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud, and
free; 65

Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent
thoughts;

The days of health, and nights of sleep;
thy toils,

By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green
turf, 70

And thy grandchildren's love for epi-
taph;

This do I see—and then I look within—
It matters not—my soul was scorched
already!

C. Hun. And wouldst thou then ex-
change thy lot for mine?

Man. No, friend! I would not wrong
thee, nor exchange 75

My lot with living being: I can bear—
However wretchedly, 'tis still to bear—
In life what others could not brook to
dream,

But perish in their slumber.

C. Hun. And with this,
This cautious feeling for another's pain, 80
Canst thou be black with evil?—say not
so.

Can one of gentle thoughts have wreaked
revenge

Upon his enemies?

Man. O! no, no, no!
My injuries came down on those who
loved me—

On those whom I best loved: I never
quelled 85

An enemy, save in my just defence—

But my embrace was fatal.

C. Hun. Heaven give thee rest!
And penitence restore thee to thyself;
My prayers shall be for thee.

Man. I need them not—
But can endure thy pity. I depart— 90
'Tis time—farewell!—Here's gold, and
thanks for thee;

No words—it is thy due.—Follow me
not:

I know my path—the mountain peril's
past:

And once again I charge thee, follow not!
[Exit MANFRED.]

SCENE II

A lower Valley in the Alps.—A Cataract.

Enter MANFRED.

It is not noon: the sunbow's rays still
arch

The torrent with the many hues of
heaven,

And roll the sheeted silver's waving
column

O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro,—like the pale courser's
tail, 100

The giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of love-
liness;

I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide 105
The homage of these waters.—I will call
her.

[*MANFRED takes some of the water into
the palm of his hand, and flings it into
the air, muttering the adjuration.
After a pause, the WITCH OF THE
ALPS rises beneath the arch of the sun-
bow of the torrent.*

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory; in whose
form

The charms of earth's least mortal
daughters grow

To an unearthly stature, in an essence 110
Of purer elements; while the hues of
youth,—

Carnationed like a sleeping infant's cheek
Rocked by the beating of her mother's
heart,

Or the rose tints which summer's twilight
leaves

Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow, 115
The blush of earth embracing with her
heaven,—

Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make
tame

The beauties of the sunbow which bends
o'er thee.

Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glassed serenity of soul, 120
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers
permit

At times to commune with them—if that
he

Avail him of his spells—to call thee
thus, 125

And gaze on thee a moment.

Witch. Son of Earth!

I know thee, and the powers which give
thee power;

I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in
both,

Fatal and fated in thy sufferings, 130
I have expected this—what wouldst thou
with me?

Man. To look upon thy beauty—noth-
ing further.

The face of the earth hath maddened me,
and I

Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern
her— 135

But they can nothing aid me. I have
sought

From them what they could not bestow,
and now

I search no further.

Witch. What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most
powerful,

The rulers of the invisible?

Man. A boon; 140
But why should I repeat it? 'twere in
vain.

Witch. I know not that; let thy lips
utter it.

✓ *Man.* Well, though it torture me, 'tis
but the same;

My pang shall find a voice. From my
youth upwards

My spirit walked not with the souls of
men, 145

Nor looked upon the earth with human
eyes;

The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
 The aim of their existence was not mine;
 My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers
 Made me a stranger; though I wore the form, 150
 I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
 Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me
 Was there but one who — but of her anon.
 I said, with men, and with the thoughts of men,
 I held but slight communion; but instead, 155
 My joy was in the wilderness, — to breathe
 The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
 Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
 Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge
 Into the torrent, and to roll along 160
 On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
 Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.
 In these my early strength exulted; or
 To follow through the night the moving moon, 164
 The stars and their development; or catch
 The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;
 Or to look, list'ning, on the scattered leaves,
 While autumn winds were at their evening song.
 These were my pastimes, and to be alone;
 For if the beings, of whom I was one, — 170
 Hating to be so, — crossed me in my path,
 I felt myself degraded back to them,
 And was all clay again. And then I dived,
 In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,
 Searching its cause in its effect; and drew 175
 From withered bones, and skull, and heaped up dust,

Conclusions most forbidden. Then I passed
 The nights of years in sciences untaught
 Save in the old time; and with time and toil,
 And terrible ordeal, and such penance 180
 As in itself hath power upon the air,
 And spirits that do compass air and earth,
 Space, and the peopled infinite, I made
 Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,
 Such as, before me, did the Magi, and 185
 He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
 Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,
 As I do thee; — and with my knowledge grew
 The thirst of knowledge, and the power and joy
 Of this most bright intelligence, until — 190
Witch. Proceed.
Man. Oh! I but thus prolonged my words,
 Boasting these idle attributes, because
 As I approach the core of my heart's grief —
 But to my task. I have not named to thee
 Father or mother, mistress, friend, or being 195
 With whom I wore the chain of human ties;
 If I had such, they seemed not such to me —
 Yet there was one —
Witch. Spare not thyself — proceed.
Man. She was like me in lineaments:
 her eyes,
 Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone 200
 Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
 But softened all, and tempered into beauty.
 She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
 The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
 To comprehend the universe: nor these 205
 Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,

Pity, and smiles, and tears — which I had
not;

And tenderness — but that I had for her;
Humility — and that I never had.

Her faults were mine — her virtues were
her own — 210

I loved her, and destroyed her!

Witch. With thy hand?

Man. Not with my hand, but heart,
which broke her heart;

It gazed on mine, and withered. I have
shed

Blood, but not hers — and yet her blood
was shed;

I saw — and could not staunch it.

Witch. And for this — 215

A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order which thine own would rise
above,

Mingling with us and ours — thou dost
forego

The gifts of our great knowledge, and
shrink'st back

To recreant mortality — Away! 220

Man. Daughter of Air! I tell thee,
since that hour —

But words are breath — look on me in my
sleep,

Or watch my watchings — Come and sit
by me!

My solitude is solitude no more,

But peopled with the Furies; — I have
gnashed 225

My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself till sunset; — I have

prayed

For madness as a blessing — 'tis denied
me.

I have affronted death — but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from
me, 230

And fatal things passed harmless; the cold
hand

Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,

Back by a single hair, which would not
break.

In fantasy, imagination, all

The affluence of my soul — which one day
was 235

A Croesus in creation — I plunged deep,
But, like an ebbing wave, it dashed me
back

Into the gulf of my unfathomed thought.

I plunged amidst mankind — Forgetful-
ness

I sought in all, save where 'tis to be
found, 240

And that I have to learn; my sciences,

My long-pursued and superhuman art,

Is mortal here: I dwell in my despair —

And live — and live for ever.

Witch. It may be
That I can aid thee.

Man. To do this thy power 245

Must wake the dead, or lay me low with
them.

Do so — in any shape — in any hour —
With any torture — so it be the last.

Witch. That is not in my province;
but if thou

Wilt swear obedience to my will, and
do 250

My bidding, it may help thee to thy
wishes.

Man. I will not swear — Obey! and
whom? the spirits

Whose presence I command, and be the
slave

Of those who served me — Never!

Witch. Is this all?

Hast thou no gentler answer? — Yet be-
think thee, 255

And pause ere thou rejectest.

Man. I have said it.

Witch. Enough! I may retire then —
say!

Man. Retire!

[*The WITCH disappears.*]

Man. (alone). We are the fools of time
and terror. Days

Steal on us, and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to

die. 260

In all the days of this detested yoke —

This vital weight upon the struggling
heart,

Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick
with pain,

Or joy that ends in agony or faintness —
 In all the days of past and future, for 265
 In life there is no present, we can number
 How few, how less than few, wherein
 the soul

Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws
 back

As from a stream in winter, though the
 chill

Be but a moment's. I have one re-
 source 270

Still in my science — I can call the dead,
 And ask them what it is we dread to be;
 The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
 And that is nothing. If they answer
 not —

The buried Prophet answered to the
 Hag 275

Of Endor; and the Spartan Monarch
 drew

From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping
 spirit

An answer and his destiny — he slew
 That which he loved, unknowing what he
 slew,

And died unpardoned — though he called
 in aid 280

The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
 The Arcadian Evocators to compel

The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
 Or fix her term of vengeance — she replied
 In words of dubious import, but ful-
 filled. 285

If I had never lived, that which I love
 Had still been living; had I never loved,
 That which I love would still be beauti-
 ful, —

Happy and giving happiness. What is
 she?

What is she now? — A sufferer for my
 sins — 290

A thing I dare not think upon — or noth-
 ing.

Within few hours I shall not call in
 vain —

Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:
 Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze
 On spirit, good or evil — now I
 tremble, 295

And feel a strange cold thaw upon my
 heart.

But I can act even what I most abhor,
 And champion human fears. — The night
 approaches. [Exit.

SCENE III

The Summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.

Enter FIRST DESTINY.

The moon is rising broad, and round, and
 bright;

And here on snows where never human
 foot 300

Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
 And leave no traces: o'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put
 on

The aspect of a tumbling tempest's
 foam, 305

Frozen in a moment — a dead whirlpool's
 image.

And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
 The fretwork of some earthquake — where
 the clouds

Pause to repose themselves in passing by —
 Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils. 310

Here do I wait my sisters, on our way
 To the Hall of Arimanes, for tonight
 Is our great festival — 'tis strange they
 come not.

A Voice without, singing.

The captive usurper,
 Hurl'd down from the throne, 315

Lay buried in torpor,
 Forgotten and lone;

I broke through his slumbers,
 I shiver'd his chain,

I leagu'd him with numbers — 320
 He's tyrant again!

With the blood of a million he'll answer
 my care,

With a nation's destruction — his flight
 and despair.

Second Voice, without.

The ship sailed on, the ship sailed fast,
 But I left not a sail, and I left not a
 mast; 325
 There is not a plank of the hull or the
 deck,
 And there is not a wretch to lament o'er
 his wreck;
 Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by
 the hair,
 And he was a subject well worthy my
 care,
 A traitor on land, and a pirate at
 sea, — 330
 But I saved him to wreak further havoc
 for me!

FIRST DESTINY, answering.

The city lies sleeping;
 The morn, to deplore it,
 May dawn on it weeping:
 Sullenly, slowly, 335
 The black plague flew o'er it —
 Thousands lie lowly;
 Tens of thousands shall perish;
 The living shall fly from
 The sick they should cherish; 340
 But nothing can vanquish
 The touch that they die from.
 Sorrow and anguish,
 And evil and dread,
 Envelop a nation; 345
 The blest are the dead,
 Who see not the sight
 Of their own desolation;
 This work of a night —
 This wreck of a realm — this deed of my
 doing — 350
 For ages I've done, and shall still be re-
 newing!

Enter the SECOND and THIRD DESTINIES.

The Three.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,
 Our footsteps are their graves;
 We only give to take again
 The spirits of our slaves! 355

First Des. Welcome! — Where's Nem-
 esis?

Second Des. At some great work;
 But what I know not, for my hands were
 full.

Third Des. Behold she cometh.

Enter NEMESIS.

First Des. Say, where hast thou been?
 My sisters and thyself are slow tonight.

Nem. I was detained repairing shat-
 tered thrones, 360
 Marrying fools, restoring dynasties;
 Avenging men upon their enemies,
 And making them repent their own re-
 venge;
 Goading the wise to madness; from the
 dull
 Shaping out oracles to rule the world 365
 Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,
 And mortals dared to ponder for them-
 selves,
 To weigh kings in the balance, and to
 speak
 Of freedom, the forbidden fruit. — Away!
 We have outstayed the hour — mount we
 our clouds! [Exeunt. 370

SCENE IV

*The Hall of Arimanes—Arimanes on his
 Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded
 by the Spirits.*

✓ *Hymn of the SPIRITS.*

Hail to our Master! Prince of Earth
 and Air!
 Who walks the clouds and waters — in
 his hand
 The sceptre of the elements, which tear
 Themselves to chaos at his high com-
 mand!
 He breatheth — and a tempest shakes the
 sea; 375
 He speaketh — and the clouds reply in
 thunder;
 He gazeth — from his glance the sunbeams
 flee;

He moveth — earthquakes rend the world asunder.

Beneath his footsteps the volcanoes rise;
His shadow is the Pestilence; his path 380

The comets herald through the crackling skies;

And planets turn to ashes at his wrath.
To him War offers daily sacrifice;
To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,

With all its infinite of agonies — 385
And his the spirit of whatever is!

Enter the DESTINIES and NEMESIS.

First Des. Glory to Arimanes! On the earth

His power increaseth — both my sisters did

His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!

Second Des. Glory to Arimanes! We who bow 390

The necks of men, bow down before his throne!

Third Des. Glory to Arimanes! We await

His nod!

Nem. Sovereign of Sovereigns! We are thine,

And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to increase 395

Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,

And we are vigilant. Thy late commands
Have been fulfilled to the utmost.

Enter MANFRED.

A Spirit. What is here?
A mortal! — Thou most rash and fatal wretch,

Bow down and worship!

Second Spirit. I do know the man — 400
A Magian of great power, and fearful skill!

Third Spirit. Bow down and worship, slave! — What, know'st thou not
Thine and our Sovereign? — Tremble, and obey!

All the Spirits. Prostrate thyself, and thy condemnèd clay,

Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.

Man. I know it; 405
And yet ye see I kneel not.

Fourth Spirit. 'Twill be taught thee.

Man. 'Tis taught already; — many a night on the earth,

On the bare ground, have I bowed down my face,

And strewed my head with ashes; I have known

The fulness of humiliation, for 410
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation.

Fifth Spirit. Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on his throne
What the whole earth accords, beholding not

The terror of his glory? — Crouch, I say. 415

Man. Bid him bow down to that which is above him,

The overruling Infinite, the Maker

Who made him not for worship — let him kneel,

And we will kneel together.

The Spirits. Crush the worm!
Tear him in pieces! —

First Des. Hence! avaunt! — he's mine. 420

Prince of the Powers invisible! This man

Is of no common order, as his port

And presence here denote. His sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own; his knowledge, and his powers
and will, 425

As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such

As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations

Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,

And they have only taught him what we know — 430

That knowledge is not happiness, and science

But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all: the passions, attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no
power, nor being, 435
Nor breath from the worm upwards is
exempt,

Have pierced his heart, and in their consequence

Made him a thing which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,
And thine, it may be;—be it so, or
not, 440

No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his—or power upon his soul.

Nem. What doth he here then?

First Des. Let him answer that.

Man. Ye know what I have known;
and without power

I could not be amongst ye: but there are
Powers deeper still beyond—I come in
quest

Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

Nem. What wouldst thou?

Man. Thou canst not reply to me.
Call up the dead—my question is for
them.

Nem. Great Arimanes, doth thy will
avouch 450

The wishes of this mortal?

Ari. Yea.

Nem. Whom wouldst thou
Uncharnel?

Man. One without a tomb—call up
Astarte.

NEMESIS

Shadow! or Spirit!
Whatever thou art, 455
Which still doth inherit
The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,
Of the mould of thy clay,
Which returned to the earth, 460
Reappear to the day!
Bear what thou borest,
The heart and the form,
And the aspect thou worst
Redeem from the worm. 465

Appear!—Appear!—Appear!
Who sent thee there requires thee here!

[*The Phantom of ASTARTE rises
and stands in the midst.*

Man. Can this be death? there's bloom
upon her cheek;

But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic—like the unnatural
red 470

Which Autumn plants upon the perished
leaf.

It is the same! Oh, God! that I should
dread

To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,
I cannot speak to her—but bid her
speak—

Forgive me or condemn me. 475

NEMESIS

By the power which hath broken
The grave which enthralled thee,
Speak to him who hath spoken,
Or those who have called thee!

Man. She is silent,
And in that silence I am more than answered. 480

Nem. My power extends no further.
Prince of Air!

It rests with thee alone—command her
voice.

Ari. Spirit—obey this sceptre!

Nem. Silent still!
She is not of our order, but belongs
To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest
is vain, 485

And we are baffled also.

Man. Hear me, hear me—
Astarte! my beloved! speak to me:
I have so much endured—so much endured—

Look on me! the grave hath not changed
thee more

Than I am changed for thee. Thou
lovedst me 490

Too much, as I loved thee: we were not
made

To torture thus each other, though it
were

The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.

Say that thou loath'st me not — that I do
bear

This punishment for both — that thou wilt
be 495

One of the blessèd — and that I shall die;
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence — in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortal-
ity —

A future like the past. I cannot rest. 500
I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
I feel but what thou art, and what I am;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice which was my music — Speak
to me!

For I have called on thee in the still
night, 505

Startled the slumbering birds from the
hushed boughs,

And woke the mountain wolves, and made
the caves

Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answered me — many things an-
swered me —

Spirits and men — but thou wert silent
all. 510

Yet speak to me! I have outwatched the
stars,

And gazed o'er heaven in vain search of
thee.

Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the
earth,

And never found thy likeness — Speak to
me!

Look on the fiends around — they feel for
me: 515

I fear them not, and feel for thee alone.
Speak to me! though it be in wrath; —

but say —

I reck not what — but let me hear thee
once —

This once — once more!

Phantom of Astarte. Manfred.

Man. Say on, say on —

I live but in the sound — it is thy
voice! 520

Phan. Manfred! Tomorrow ends
thine earthly ills.

Farewell!

Man. Yet one word more — am I
forgiven?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. Say, shall we meet again?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. One word for mercy! Say, thou
lovest me.

Phan. Manfred!

[*The Spirit of ASTARTE disappears.*]

Nem. She's gone, and will not be
recalled; 525

Her words will be fulfilled. Return to
the earth.

A Spirit. He is convulsed. — This is to
be a mortal

And seek the things beyond mortality.

Another Spirit. Yet, see, he mastereth
himself, and makes

His torture tributary to his will. 530

Had he been one of us, he would have
made

An awful spirit.

Nem. Hast thou further question
Of our great sovereign, or his worship-
pers?

Man. None.

Nem. Then for a time farewell.

Man. We meet then! Where? On
the earth? —

Even as thou wilt: and for the grace ac-
corded

I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well!

[*Exit* MANFRED.]

(*Scene closes.*)

ACT THIRD

SCENE I

A Hall in the Castle of Manfred

MANFRED and HERMAN.

Man. What is the hour?

Her. It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

Man. Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?

Her. All, my lord, are ready:
Here is the key and casket.

Man. It is well: 5
Thou may'st retire. [*Exit HERMAN.*

Man. (alone). There is a calm upon
me —

Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knēw of life.
If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest, 10
The merest word that ever fooled the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should
deem

The golden secret, the sought "Kalon,"
found,

And seated in my soul. It will not last,
But it is well to have known it, though
but once; 15

It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new
sense,

And I within my tablets would note down
That there is such a feeling, — Who is
there?

Re-enter HERMAN.

Her. My lord, the abbot of St. Mau-
rice craves
To greet your presence.

Enter the ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.

Abbot. Peace be with Count Man-
fred! 20

Man. Thanks, holy father! welcome
to these walls;

Thy presence honors them, and blesseth
those

Who dwell within them.

Abbot. Would it were so, Count! —
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

Man. Herman, retire. — What would
my reverend guest? 25

Abbot. Thus, without prelude: — Age
and zeal, my office,

And good intent, must plead my privilege;
Our near, though not acquainted, neigh-
borhood

May also be my herald. Rumors strange,
And of unholy nature, are abroad, 30
And busy with thy name; a noble name

For centuries: may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpaired!

Man. Proceed, — I listen.

Abbot. 'Tis said thou holdest converse
with the things

Which are forbidden to the search of
man; 35

That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits

Which walk the valley of the shade of
death,

Thou communest. I know that with man-
kind,

Thy fellows in creation, thou dost
rarely 40

Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy soli-
tude

Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

Man. And what are they who do
avouch these things?

Abbot. My pious brethren — the scared
peasantry —

Even thy own vassals — who do look on
thee 45

With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in
peril.

Man. Take it.

Abbot. I come to save, and not
destroy:

I would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is
time

For penitence and pity: reconcile thee 50
With the true church, and through the
church to heaven.

Man. I hear thee. This is my reply:
whate'er

I may have been, or am, doth rest be-
tween

Heaven and myself: I shall not choose a
mortal

To be my mediator. Have I sinned 55
Against your ordinances? prove and pun-
ish!

Abbot. My son! I did not speak of
punishment,

But penitence and pardon; with thyself
The choice of such remains — and for the
last,

Our institutions and our strong belief 60
Have given me power to smoothe the path
from sin

To higher hope and better thoughts; the
first

I leave to heaven, — "Vengeance is mine
alone!"

So saith the Lord, and with all humble-
ness

His servant echoes back the awful word. 65

Man. Old man! there is no power in
holy men,

Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor
fast,

Nor agony, — nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep de-
spair, 70

Which is remorse without the fear of
hell,

But all in all sufficient to itself

Would make a hell of heaven, — can ex-
orcise

From out the unbounded spirit the quick
sense

Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and
revenge 75

Upon itself; there is no future pang

Can deal that justice on the self-con-
demned

He deals on his own soul.

Abbot. All this is well;

For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look
up 80

With calm assurance to that blessed place
Which all who seek may win, whatever
be

Their earthly errors, so they be atoned:

And the commencement of atonement is

The sense of its necessity. — Say on — 85

And all our church can teach thee shall
be taught;

And all we can absolve thee shall be
pardoned.

Man. When Rome's sixth emperor was
near his last,

The victim of a self-inflicted wound,

To shun the torments of a public death 90

From senates once his slaves, a certain
soldier,

With show of loyal pity, would have
staunched

The gushing throat with his officious robe;

The dying Roman thrust him back, and
said —

Some empire still in his expiring
glance — 95

"It is too late — is this fidelity?"

Abbot. And what of this?

Man. I answer with the Roman,
"It is too late!"

Abbot. It never can be so,

To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul with heaven. Hast
thou no hope? 100

'Tis strange — even those who do despair
above,

Yet shape themselves some fantasy on
earth,

To which frail twig they cling, like drown-
ing men.

Man. Ay, father! I have had those
earthly visions,

And noble aspirations in my youth, 105

To make my own the mind of other men,

The enlightener of nations; and to rise

I knew not whither — it might be to fall;

But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,

Which having leapt from its more daz-
zling height, 110

Even in the foaming strength of its abyss
(Which casts up misty columns that be-
come

Clouds raining from the reascended skies)

Lies low but mighty still. — But this is
past;

My thoughts mistook themselves.

Abbot. And wherefore so? 115

Man. I could not tame my nature
down; for he

Must serve who fain would sway — and
soothe, and sue,

And watch all time, and pry into all place,

And be a living lie, who would become

A mighty thing amongst the mean, and
such 120

The mass are; I disdained to mingle with

A herd, though to be leader—and of
wolves.

The lion is alone, and so am I.

Abbot. And why not live and act with
other men?

Man. Because my nature was averse
from life; 125

And yet not cruel; for I would not make,
But find, a desolation. Like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone
simoom,

Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps
o'er

The barren sands which bear no shrubs to
blast, 130

And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly,—such hath been
The course of my existence; but there
came

Things in my path which are no more.

Abbot. Alas! 135

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
From me and from my calling; yet so
young,

I still would—

Man. Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle
age, 140

Without the violence of warlike death;
Some perishing of pleasure, some of study,
Some worn with toil, some of mere wear-
iness,

Some of disease, and some insanity,
And some of withered or of broken
hearts,— 145

For this last is a malady which slays
More than are numbered in the lists of
Fate,

Taking all shapes, and bearing many
names.

Look upon me! for even of all these things
Have I partaken; and of all these things, 150
One were enough; then wonder not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was,—

Or having been, that I am still on earth.

Abbot. Yet, hear me still—

Man. Old man! I do respect

Thine order, and revere thine years; I
deem 155

Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain.

Think me not churlish; I would spare thy-
self,

Far more than me, in shunning at this
time

All further colloquy; and so—farewell.

[*Exit MANFRED.*]

Abbot. This should have been a noble
creature; he 160

Hath all the energy which would have
made

A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos—light and darkness,
And mind and dust, and passions and pure
thoughts, 165

Mixed, and contending without end or
order,—

All dormant or destructive. He will
perish,

And yet he must not; I will try once more,
For such are worth redemption; and my
duty

Is to dare all things for a righteous
end. 170

I'll follow him—but cautiously, though
surely. [*Exit ABBOT.*]

SCENE II

Another Chamber.

MANFRED and HERMAN.

Her. My lord, you bade me wait on
you at sunset:

He sinks behind the mountain.

Man. Doth he so?

I will look on him. [*MANFRED advances
to the window of the Hall.*]

Glorious Orb! the idol

Of early nature, and the vigorous race 175

Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons

Of the embrace of angels with a sex

More beautiful than they, which did draw
down

The erring spirits who can ne'er return—
Most glorious orb! that wert a worship-
ere 180

The mystery of thy making was revealed!
 Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
 Which gladdened, on their mountain tops,
 the hearts
 Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they
 poured
 Themselves in orisons! Thou material
 God! 185
 And representative of the Unknown,
 Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou
 chief star!
 Centre of many stars, which mak'st our
 earth
 Endurable, and temperest the hues
 And hearts of all who walk within thy
 rays! 190
 Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the
 climes,
 And those who dwell in them! for near or
 far,
 Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee,
 Even as our outward aspects:—Thou
 dost rise,
 And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee
 well! 195
 I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first
 glance
 Of love and wonder was for thee, then
 take
 My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one
 To whom the gifts of life and warmth
 have been
 Of a more fatal nature. He is gone: 200
 I follow. [Exit MANFRED.]

SCENE III

*The Mountains—The Castle of Manfred
 at some distance—A Terrace before a
 Tower—Time, Twilight.*

HERMAN, MANUEL and other Dependents
 of MANFRED.

Her. 'Tis strange enough; night after
 night, for years,
 He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
 Without a witness. I have been within
 it,—
 So have we all been oft times; but from it, 205
 Or its contents, it were impossible

To draw conclusions absolute of aught
 His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
 One chamber where none enter: I would
 give

The fee of what I have to come these
 three years, 210

To pore upon its mysteries.

Manuel. 'Twere dangerous;
 Content thyself with what thou know'st
 already.

Her. Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly
 and wise,

And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt
 within the castle—

How many years is't?

Manuel. Ere Count Manfred's birth, 215
 I served his father, whom he nought re-
 sembles.

Her. There be more sons in like pre-
 dicament.

But wherein do they differ?

Manuel. I speak not
 Of features or of form, but mind and
 habits;

Count Sigismund was proud, but gay and
 free, — 220

A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not
 With books and solitude, nor made the
 night

A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
 Merrier than day; he did not walk the
 rocks

And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside 225
 From men and their delights.

Her. Beshrew the hour,
 But those were jocund times! I would
 that such

Would visit the old walls again; they look
 As if they had forgotten them.

Manuel. These walls
 Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I
 have seen 230

Some strange things in them, Herman.

Her. Come, be friendly;
 Relate me some to while away our
 watch:

I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
 Which happened hereabouts, by this same
 tower.

Manuel. That was a night indeed! I
do remember 235
'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and
such
Another evening: yon red cloud which
rests
On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then, —
So like that it might be the same; the
wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain
snows 240
Began to glitter with the climbing moon.
Count Manfred was, as now, within his
tower, —
How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings — her, whom of all earthly
things 245
That lived, the only thing he seemed to
love, —
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The lady Astarte, his —
Hush! who comes here?

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. Where is your master?
Her. Yonder in the tower.
Abbot. I must speak with him.
Manuel. 'Tis impossible; 250
He is most private, and must not be thus
Intruded on.
Abbot. Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there
be —
But I must see him.
Her. Thou hast seen him once
This eve already.
Abbot. Herman! I command thee, 255
Knock, and apprise the Count of my
approach.
Her. We dare not.
Abbot. Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.
Manuel. Reverend father, stop —
I pray you pause.
Abbot. Why so?
Manuel. But step this way,
And I will tell you further. [*Exeunt.* 260

SCENE IV

Interior of the Tower.

MANFRED alone.

The stars are forth, the moon above the
tops
Of the snow-shining mountains. — Beau-
tiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry
shade 265
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learned the language of another
world.
I do remember me that in my youth,
When I was wandering, — upon such a
night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall, 270
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome.
The trees which grew along the broken
arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the
stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from
afar
The watch-dog bayed beyond the Tiber;
and 275
More near from out the Cæsars' palace
came
The owl's long cry; and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn
breach 280
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they
stood
Within a bowshot. Where the Cæsars
dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night,
amidst
A grove which springs through levelled
battlements
And twines its roots with the imperial
hearths, 285
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;
But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection, —

While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,
 Grovel on earth in indistinct decay. 290
 And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon,
 upon
 All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
 Which softened down the hoar austerity
 Of rugged desolation, and filled up,
 As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries; 295
 Leaving that beautiful which still was
 so,
 And making that which was not, till the
 place
 Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
 With silent worship of the great of old, —
 The dead but sceptred sovereigns, who
 still rule 300
 Our spirits from their urns. —
 'Twas such a night!
 'Tis strange that I recall it at this time;
 But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
 Even at the moment when they should
 array
 Themselves in pensive order.

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. My good lord! 305
 I crave a second grace for this approach;
 But yet let not my humble zeal offend
 By its abruptness — all it hath of ill
 Recoils on me; its good in the effect
 May light upon your head — could I say
heart, 310
 Could I touch *that*, with words or prayers,
 I should
 Recall a noble spirit which hath wandered
 But is not yet all lost.

Man. Thou know'st me not;
 My days are numbered, and my deeds
 recorded:

Retire, or 'twill be dangerous — Away! 315

Abbot. Thou dost not mean to menace
 me?

Man. Not I;
 I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
 And would preserve thee.

Abbot. What dost thou mean?

Man. Look there!

What dost thou see?

Abbot. Nothing.

Man. Look there, I say,
 And steadfastly; — now tell me what thou
 seest? 320

Abbot. That which should shake me —
 but I fear it not:

I see a dusk and awful figure rise,
 Like an infernal god, from out the earth;
 His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
 Robed as with angry clouds: he stands
 between 325

Thyself and me — but I do fear him not.

Man. Thou hast no cause: he shall not
 harm thee — but

His sight may shock thine old limbs into
 palsy.

I say to thee, Retire!

Abbot. And I reply,

Never — till I have battled with this
 fiend: — 330

What doth he here?

Man. Why — ay — what doth he here?

I did not send for him, — he is unbidden.

Abbot. Alas! lost mortal! what with
 guests like these

Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy
 sake:

Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on
 him? 335

Ah! he unveils his aspect: on his brow
 The thunder-scars are graven: from his
 eye

Glares forth the immortality of hell —

Avaunt! —

Man. Pronounce — what is thy mission?

Spirit. Come! —

Abbot. What art thou, unknown being?
 answer! — speak! 340

Spirit. The genius of this mortal. —
 Come! 'tis time.

Man. I am prepared for all things, but
 deny

The power which summons me. Who sent
 thee here?

Spirit. Thou'lt know anon — Come!
 Come!

Man. I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than
thine, 345
And striven with thy masters. Get thee
hence!

Spirit. Mortal! thine hour is come —
Away! I say.

Man. I knew, and know my hour is
come, but not

To render up my soul to such as thee:
Away! I'll die as I have lived — alone. 350

Spirit. Then I must summon up my
brethren.— Rise!

[*Other Spirits rise up.*]

Abbot. Avaunt! ye evil ones!—Avaunt!
I say,—

Ye have no power where piety hath
power,

And I do charge ye in the name—

Spirit. Old man!
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine
order; 355

Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.

Once more I summon him—Away!
Away!

Man. I do defy ye, — though I feel my
soul

Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye; 360
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly
breath

To breathe my scorn upon ye—earthly
strength

To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye
take

Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

Spirit. Reluctant mortal!
Is this the Magian who would so per-
vade 365

The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our equal? Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life? the very life
Which made thee wretched!

Man. Thou false fiend, thou liest!
My life is in its last hour,—*that* I
know, 370
Nor would redeem a moment of that
hour:

I do not combat against death, but thee

And thy surrounding angels. My past
power

Was purchased by no compact with thy
crew,

But by superior science, penance, daring, 375
And length of watching, strength of mind,
and skill

In knowledge of our fathers—when the
earth

Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy: I stand

Upon my strength—I do defy—
deny— 380

Spurn back, and scorn ye!—

Spirit. But thy many crimes
Have made thee—

Man. What are they to such as thee?
Must crimes be punished but by other
crimes,

And greater criminals?—Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I
feel; 385

Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from
thine.

The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts — 390
Is its own origin of ill and end

And its own place and time: its innate
sense,

When stripped of this mortality, derives
No color from the fleeting things without,
But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy, 395
Born from the knowledge of its own
desert.

Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst
not tempt me;

I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy
prey,—

But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled
fiends! 400

The hand of death is on me—but not
yours! [*The Demons disappear.*]

Abbot. Alas! how pale thou art—thy
lips are white—

And thy breast heaves—and in thy gasp-
ing throat

The accents rattle. Give thy prayers to
heaven —

Pray, — albeit but in thought, — but die
not thus.

Man. 'Tis over — my dull eyes can fix
thee not;

But all things swim around me, and the
earth

Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee
well —

Give me thy hand.

Abbot. Cold — cold — even to the
heart —

But yet one prayer — Alas! how fares it
with thee? 410

Man. Old man! 'tis not so difficult to
die. [MANFRED expires.

Abbot. He's gone — his soul hath ta'en
its earthless flight;

Whither? I dread to think — but he is
gone.

SO WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVING

(1817)

So we'll go no more a-roving

So late into the night,

Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath, 5

And the soul wears out the breast,

And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,

And the day returns too soon, 10

Yet we'll go no more a-roving

By the light of the moon.

MY BOAT IS ON THE SHORE

(1817)

My boat is on the shore,

And my bark is on the sea;

But, before I go, Tom Moore,

Here's a double health to thee!

Here's a sigh to those who love me, 5

And a smile to those who hate;

And, whatever sky's above me,

Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,

Yet it still shall bear me on; 10

Though a desert should surround me,

It hath springs that may be won.

Were't the last drop in the well,

As I gasped upon the brink,

Ere my fainting spirit fell, 15

'Tis to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,

The libation I would pour

Should be — peace with thine and mine,

And a health to thee, Tom Moore. 20

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

From CANTO FOURTH

(1817)

Venice and Sunset

I

I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,

A palace and a prison on each hand;

I saw from out the wave her structures
rise

As from the stroke of the enchanter's
wand:

A thousand years their cloudy wings ex-
pand 5

Around me, and a dying Glory smiles

O'er the far times, when many a subject
land

Looked to the wingèd Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her
hundred isles!

II

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean, 10

Rising with her tiara of proud towers

At airy distance, with majestic motion,

A ruler of the waters and their powers.

And such she was:—her daughters had
 their dowers
 From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless
 East 15
 Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling
 showers;
 In purple was she robed, and of her feast
 Monarchs partook, and deemed their dig-
 nity increased.

III

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
 And silent rows the songless gondolier; 20
 Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
 And music meets not always now the ear.
 Those days are gone—but Beauty still is
 here:
 States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth
 not die,
 Nor yet forget how Venice once was
 dear, 25
 The pleasant place of all festivity,
 The revel of the earth, the masque of
 Italy!

IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
 Her name in story, and her long array
 Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms
 despond 30
 Above the dogeless city's vanished sway:
 Ours is a trophy which will not decay
 With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
 And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn
 away—
 The keystones of the arch!—though all
 were o'er, 35
 For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

V

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
 Essentially immortal, they create
 And multiply in us a brighter ray
 And more beloved existence. That which
 Fate 40
 Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
 Of mortal bondage, by these spirits sup-
 plied,
 First exiles, then replaces what we hate;

Watering the heart whose early flowers
 have died,
 And with a fresher growth replenishing the
 void. 45

XXV

But my soul wanders; I demand it back
 To meditate amongst decay, and stand
 A ruin amidst ruins; there to track
 Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a
 land 220
 Which *was* the mightiest in its old com-
 mand,
 And *is* the loveliest, and must ever be
 The master-mould of Nature's heavenly
 hand;
 Wherein were cast the heroic and the
 free,
 The beautiful, the brave,—the lords of
 earth and sea, 225

XXVI

The commonwealth of kings, the men of
 Rome!
 And even since, and now, fair Italy,
 Thou art the garden of the world, the
 home
 Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree!
 Even in thy desert, what is like to
 thee?
 Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
 More rich than other climes' fertility;
 Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
 With an immaculate charm which cannot
 be defaced.

XXVII

The moon is up, and yet it is not night; 235
 Sunset divides the sky with her; a sea
 Of glory streams along the Alpine height
 Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free
 From clouds, but of all colors seems to be
 Melted to one vast Iris of the West, 240
 Where the Day joins the past Eternity;
 While, on the other hand, meek Dian's
 crest
 Floats through the azure air,—an island
 of the blest!

XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns
 With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but
 still 245
 Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and re-
 mains
 Rolled o'er the peak of the far Rhætian
 hill,
 As Day and Night contending were, until
 Nature reclaimed her order: gently flows
 The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues
 instil 250
 The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
 Which streams upon her stream, and
 glassed within it glows,

XXIX

Filled with the face of heaven, which,
 from afar,
 Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,
 From the rich sunset to the rising star, 255
 Their magical variety diffuse.
 And now they change: a paler shadow
 strews
 Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting
 day
 Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang
 imbues
 With a new color as it gasps away, 260
 The last still loveliest, — till — 'tis gone
 — and all is gray.

Rome and Freedom

LXXVIII

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
 The orphans of the heart must turn to
 thee, 695
 Lone mother of dead empires, and control
 In their shut breasts their petty misery.
 What are our woes and sufferance? Come
 and see
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your
 way
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples,
 Ye! 700
 Whose agonies are evils of a day —
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our
 clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless
 woe;
 An empty urn within her withered
 hands, 705
 Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
 The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers; — dost thou
 flow,
 Old Tiber, through a marble wilder-
 ness? 710
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle
 her distress!

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War,
 Flood, and Fire,
 Have dealt upon the seven-hilled city's
 pride;
 She saw her glories star by star expire
 And, up the steep, barbarian monarchs
 ride 715
 Where the car climbed the Capitol; far
 and wide
 Temple and tower went down, nor left a
 site: —
 Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
 And say, "here was, or is," where all is
 doubly night? 720

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
 Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt
 and wrap
 All round us; we but feel our way to err:
 The Ocean hath his chart, the stars their
 map,
 And Knowledge spreads them on her ample
 lap; 725
 But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
 Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
 Our hands, and cry "Eureka! it is
 clear!" —
 When but some false mirage of ruin rises
 near.

LXXXII

Alas, the lofty city! and alas, 730
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
 When Brutus made the dagger's edge sur-
 pass
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame
 away!
 Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
 And Livy's pictured page! — but these
 shall be 735
 Her resurrection; all beside — decay.
 Alas for Earth! for never shall we see
 That brightness in her eye she bore when
 Rome was free!

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,
 And Freedom find no champion and no
 child
 Such as Columbia saw arise when she
 Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and unde-
 filed?
 Or must such minds be nourished in the
 wild, 860
 Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the
 roar
 Of cataracts, where nursing Nature
 smiled
 On infant Washington? Has Earth no
 more
 Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no
 such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit
 crime, 865
 And fatal have her Saturnalia been
 To Freedom's cause, in every age and
 clime;
 Because the deadly days which we have
 seen,
 And vile Ambition, that built up between
 Man and his hopes an adamant wall, 870
 And the base pageant last upon the scene,
 Are grown the pretext for the eternal
 thrall
 Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's
 worst — his second fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but
 flying,
 Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the
 wind; 875
 Thy trumpet voice, though broken now
 and dying,
 The loudest still the tempest leaves be-
 hind:
 Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the
 rind,
 Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little
 worth,
 But the sap lasts, — and still the seed we
 find 880
 Sown deep, even in the bosom of the
 North;
 So shall a better spring less bitter fruit
 bring forth.

Desire and Disillusion

CXX

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
 Or water but the desert; whence arise
 But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of
 haste,
 Rank at the core, though tempting to the
 eyes, 1075
 Flowers whose wild odors breathe but
 agonies,
 And trees whose gums are poison; — such
 the plants
 Which spring beneath her steps as Passion
 flies
 O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly
 pants
 For some celestial fruit forbidden to our
 wants. 1080

CXXI

Oh Love! no habitant of earth thou art —
 An unseen seraph, we believe in thee, —
 A faith whose martyrs are the broken
 heart;
 But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
 The naked eye, thy form, as it should
 be. 1085

The mind hath made thee, as it peopled
 heaven,
 Even with its own desiring phantasy,
 And to a thought such shape and image
 given,
 As haunts the unquenched soul — parched
 — wearied — wrung — and riven.

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased, 1090
 And fevers into false creation: — where,
 Where are the forms the sculptor's soul
 hath seized? —
 In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
 Where are the charms and virtues which
 we dare 1094
 Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men, —
 The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
 Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
 And overpowers the page where it would
 bloom again?

CXXIII

Who loves, raves — 'tis youth's frenzy;
 but the cure
 Is bitterer still. As charm by charm un-
 winds 1100
 Which robed our idols, and we see too
 sure
 Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the
 mind's
 Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
 The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
 Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown
 winds: 1105
 The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
 Seems ever near the prize, — wealthiest
 when most undone.

CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp
 away —
 Sick — sick; unfound the boon — unslaked
 the thirst;
 Though to the last, in verge of our de-
 cay, 1110
 Some phantom lures, such as we sought at
 first —

But all too late, — so are we doubly curst.
 Love, fame, ambition, avarice — 'tis the
 same,
 Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst—
 For all are meteors with a different name,
 And Death the sable smoke where vanishes
 the flame. 1116

CXXV

Few — none — find what they love or
 could have loved;
 Though accident, blind contact, and the
 strong
 Necessity of loving, have removed
 Antipathies — but to recur, ere long, 1120
 Envenomed with irrevocable wrong;
 And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
 And miscreator, makes and helps along
 Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
 Whose touch turns Hope to dust, — the
 dust we all have trod. 1125

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature, 'tis not in
 The harmony of things — this hard decree,
 This uneradicable taint of sin,
 This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree
 Whose root is earth, whose leaves and
 branches be 1130
 The skies which rain their plagues on men
 like dew:
 Disease, death, bondage, all the woes we
 see —
 And worse, the woes we see not, — which
 throb through
 The immedicable soul, with heart-aches
 ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly; 'tis a base 1135
 Abandonment of reason to resign
 Our right of thought, our last and only
 place
 Of refuge — this, at least, shall still be
 mine.
 Though from our birth the faculty divine
 Is chained and tortured — cabined, cribbed,
 confined, 1140

And bred in darkness, lest the truth should
shine
Too brightly on the unprepared mind —
The beam pours in, for time and skill will
couch the blind.

The Coliseum

CXXVIII

Arches on arches! — as it were that
Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line, 1145
Would build up all her triumphs in one
dome,
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams
shine
As 'twere its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to
illuminate
This long-explored but still exhaustless
mine 1150
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies
assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words and speak to ye of
heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monu-
ment,
And shadows forth its glory. There is
given 1155
Unto the things of earth which Time hath
bent,
A spirit's feeling; and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a
power
And magic in the ruined battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are
its dower. 1161

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmured pity or loud-roared applause,
As man was slaughtered by his fellow
man. 1245

And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore,
but because

Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore
not?

What matters where we fall to fill the
maws

Of worms — on battle-plain or listed
spot? 1250

Both are but theatres where the chief
actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:

He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually
low — 1255

And through his side the last drops, ebbing
slow

From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and
now

The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed
the wretch who won. 1260

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart and that was far
away;

He recked not of the life he lost, nor
prize;

But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at
play, 1265

There was their Dacian mother — he, their
sire,

Butchered to make a Roman holiday —

All this rushed with his blood. — Shall he
expire

And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and
glut your ire!

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her
bloody steam; 1270

And here, where buzzing nations choked
the ways,

And roared or murmured like a mountain
stream

Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman millions' blame or
praise

Was death or life, the playthings of a
crowd, — 1275

My voice sounds much, and fall the stars'
faint rays

On the arena void — seats crushed —
walls bowed —

And galleries, where my steps seem echoes
strangely loud.

CXLIII

A ruin — yet what ruin! From its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been
reared; 1280

Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass
And marvel where the spoil could have
appeared.

Hath it indeed been plundered, or but
cleared?

Alas! developed, opens the decay, 1284
When the colossal fabric's form is neared:
It will not bear the brightness of the
day,

Which streams too much on all years,
man, have reft away.

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to
climb

Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops
of time, 1290

And the low night-breeze waves along the
air

The garland forest, which the gray walls
wear

Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's
head;

When the light shines serene but doth not
glare, 1294

Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot — 'tis on their
dust ye tread.

The Ocean

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore, 1595
There is society where none intrudes
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I
steal 1599

From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet can not all
conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean,
roll!

Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in
vain:

Man marks the earth with ruin, his con-
trol 1605

Stops with the shore. Upon the watery
plain

The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth
remain

A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling
groan, 1610

Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined,
and unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy
fields

Are not a spoil for him, — thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength
he wields

For earth's destruction thou dost all de-
spise, 1615

Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful
spray

And howling, to his Gods, where haply
lies

His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: — there
let him lay. 1620

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the
walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
And monarchs tremble in their capitals, —
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take 1625
Of lord of thee and arbiter of war, —
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy
flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which
mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of
Trafalgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all
save thee — 1630
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what
are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they
were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so
thou, 1635
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves'
play, —
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure
brow;
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou
rollest now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror where the Almighty's
form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time, —
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or
storm, — 1641
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving — boundless, endless, and
sublime,
The image of Eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy
slime 1645
The monsters of the deep are made; each
zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread,
fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From a
boy 1650
I wantoned with thy breakers — they to
me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror — 'twas a pleasing
fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane — as I
do here. 1656

DON JUAN

From CANTO SECOND

(1818-19)

Juan and Haidée: Ways of Love

CLXXXI

The coast — I think it was the coast that I
Was just describing, — yes, it *was* the
coast —
Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves
untost:
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's
cry, 1445
And dolphin's leap, and little billow
crost
By some low rock or shelve, that made it
fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

CLXXXII

And forth they wandered, her sire being
gone,
As I have said, upon an expedition; 1450
And mother, brother, guardian, she had
none
Save Zoe, who, although with due pre-
cision
She waited on her lady with the sun,
Thought daily service was her only
mission, —

Bringing warm water, wreathing her long
tresses, 1455
And asking now and then for cast-off
dresses.

CLXXXIII

It was the cooling hour, just when the
rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure
hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it
bounded,
Circling all nature, hushed, and dim,
and still, — 1460
With the far mountain-crescent half sur-
rounded
On one side; and the deep sea, calm and
chill,
Upon the other, and the rosy sky,
With one star sparkling through it like an
eye.

CLXXXIV

And thus they wandered forth; and hand
in hand, 1465
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and hardened
sand;
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Worked by the storms, yet worked as it
were planned,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and
cells, 1470
They turned to rest; and, each clasped by
an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple
charm.

CLXXXV

They looked up to the sky; whose floating
glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and
bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea be-
low, 1475
Whence the broad moon rose circling
into sight;
They heard the waves splash, and the wind
so low;
And saw each other's dark eyes darting
light

Into each other — and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a
kiss:

CLXXXVI

A long, long kiss, — a kiss of youth and
love
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart and soul and sense in concert
move, 1485
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a
blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake — for a kiss's
strength,
I think it must be reckoned by its length.

CLXXXVII

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long — no doubt
they never reckoned; 1490
And if they had, they could not have se-
cured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken; but they felt al-
lured,
As if their souls and lips each other
beckoned,
Which, being joined, like swarming bees
they clung —
Their hearts the flowers from whence the
honey sprung.

CLXXXVIII

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneli-
ness:
The silent ocean and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momentarily
grew less, 1500
The voiceless sands and dropping caves
that lay
Around them, made them to each other
press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never
die.

CLXXXIX

They feared no eyes nor ears on that lone
beach, 1505

They felt no terrors from the night; they
were

All in all to each other: though their
speech

Was broken words, they *thought* a lan-
guage there, —

And all the burning tongues the passions
teach 1509

Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle — first love, — that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since
her fall.

CXC

Haidée spoke not of scruples, asked no
vows,

Nor offered any: she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse, 1515

Of perils by a loving maid incurred;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young
bird;

And, never having dreamt of falsehood,
she

Had not one word to say of constancy. 1520

CXCI

She loved, and was belovèd — she adored,
And she was worshipped: after nature's
fashion

Their intense souls into each other poured,
If souls could die, had perished in that
passion;

But by degrees their senses were re-
stored, — 1525

Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on:
And, beating 'gainst *his* bosom, Haidée's
heart

Felt as if never more to beat apart.

CXCH

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless; and the
hour 1530

Was that in which the heart is always full
And, having o'er itself no further power,

Prompts deeds eternity can not annul,

But pays off moments in an endless
shower

Of hell-fire — all prepared for people
giving 1535

Pleasure or pain to one another living.

CXCIH

Alas! for Juan and Haidée! they were

So loving and so lovely — till then never,
Excepting our first parents, such a pair

Had run the risk of being damned for-
ever: 1540

And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,
Had, doubtless, heard about the Stygian
river,

And hell and purgatory — but forgot
Just in the very crisis she should not.

CXCIIV

They look upon each other, and their
eyes 1545

Gleam in the moonlight; and her white
arm clasps

Round Juan's head, and his around her
lies

Half buried in the tresses which it
grasps;

She sits upon his knee, and drinks his
sighs, 1549

He hers, until they end in broken gasps:
And thus they form a group that's quite
antique, —

Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

CXCV

And when those deep and burning mo-
ments passed,

And Juan sunk to sleep within her
arms,

She slept not, but all tenderly, though
fast, 1555

Sustained his head upon her bosom's
charms;

And now and then her eye to heaven is
cast,

And then on the pale cheek her breast
now warms,

Pillowed on her o'erflowing heart, which
pants
With all it granted, and with all it
grants. 1560

CXCVI

An infant when it gazes on a light,
A child the moment when it drains the
breast,
A devotee when soars the Host in sight,
An Arab with a stranger for a guest,
A sailor when the prize has struck in
sight, 1565
A miser filling his most hoarded chest,
Feel rapture, — but not such true joy are
reaping
As they who watch o'er what they love
while sleeping.

CXCVII

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
All that it hath of life with us is liv-
ing; 1570
So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved,
And all unconscious of the joy 'tis giv-
ing;
All it hath felt, inflicted, passed, and
proved,
Hushed into depths beyond the watch-
er's diving:
There lies the thing we love with all its
errors 1575
And all its charms, like death without its
terrors.

CXCVIII

The lady watched her lover — and that
hour
Of Love's, and Night's, and Ocean's
solitude,
O'erflow'd her soul with their united
power;
Amidst the barren sand and rocks so
rude 1580
She and her wave-worn love had made
their bower,
Where nought upon their passion could
intrude,

And all the stars that crowded the blue
space
Saw nothing happier than her glowing
face.

CXCIX

Alas! the love of women! it is known 1585
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to
bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone;
And their revenge is as the tiger's
spring, 1590
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as
real
Torture is theirs, what they inflict they
feel.

CC

They are right; for man, to man so oft
unjust,
Is always so to women; one sole bond
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts
despond 1596
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage — and what rests
beyond?
A thankless husband, next a faithless
lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's
over. 1600

CCI

Some take a lover, some take drams or
prayers,
Some mind their household, others dis-
sipation;
Some run away, and but exchange their
cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous sta-
tion; 1604
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Theirs being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
Some play the devil, and then write a
novel.

CCII

Haidée was Nature's bride, and knew not
this:

Haidée was Passion's child, born where
the sun 1610

Showers triple light, and scorches even the
kiss

Of his gazelle-eyed daughters; she was
one

Made but to love, to feel that she was
his

Who was her chosen: what was said or
done

Elsewhere was nothing. She had nought
to fear, 1615

Hope, care, nor love beyond, — her heart
beat *here*.

CCIII

And oh! that quickening of the heart, that
beat!

How much it costs us! Yet each rising
throb

Is in its cause as its effect so sweet

That wisdom, ever on the watch to
rob 1620

Joy of its alchemy, and to repeat

Fine truths — even Conscience, too, has
a tough job

To make us understand each good old
maxim, —

So good — I wonder Castlereagh don't tax
'em.

CCIV

And now 'twas done — on the lone shore
were plighted 1625

Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial
torches, shed

Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted:

Ocean their witness, and the cave their
bed,

By their own feelings hallowed and united,
Their priest was Solitude, and they

were wed: 1630

And they were happy, for to their young
eyes

Each was an angel, and earth paradise.

CCV

Oh, Love! of whom great Cæsar was the
suitor,

Titus the master, Antony the slave,

Horace, Catullus, scholars, Ovid tutor, 1635

Sappho the sage blue-stocking, — in
whose grave

All those may leap who rather would be
neuter

(Leucadia's rock still overlooks the
wave) —

Oh, Love! thou art the very god of evil,

For, after all, we cannot call thee
devil. 1640

CCVI

Thou mak'st the chaste connubial state
precarious,

And jestest with the brows of mightiest
men:

Cæsar and Pompey, Mahomet, Belisarius,

Have much employed the muse of his-
tory's pen;

Their lives and fortunes were extremely
various,

Such worthies Time will never see
again:

Yet to these four in three things the same
luck holds,

They all were heroes, conquerors, and
cuckolds.

CCVII

Thou mak'st philosophers: there's Epi-
curus

And Aristippus, a material crew! 1650

Who to immoral courses would allure us

By theories quite practicable too;

If only from the devil they would insure
us,

How pleasant were the maxim (not
quite new),

"Eat, drink, and love; what can the rest
avail us?" 1655

So said the royal sage, Sardanapalus.

CCVIII

But Juan! had he quite forgotten Julia?

And should he have forgotten her so
soon?

I can't but say it seems to me most truly a
Perplexing question; but, no doubt, the
moon 1660

Does these things for us, and whenever
newly a

Strong palpitation rises, 'tis her boon, —
Else how the devil is it that fresh features
Have such a charm for us poor human
creatures?

CCIX

I hate inconstancy — I loathe, detest, 1665
Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made
Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
No permanent foundation can be laid;
Love, constant love, has been my constant
guest, —

And yet last night, being at a masque-
rade, 1670

I saw the prettiest creature, fresh from
Milan,

Which gave me some sensations like a
villain.

CCX

But soon Philosophy came to my aid,
And whispered, "Think of every sacred
tie!"

"I will, my dear Philosophy!" I said, 1675
"But then her teeth! and then, oh heaven,
her eye!

I'll just inquire if she be wife or maid,
Or neither — out of curiosity."

"Stop!" cried Philosophy, with air so
Grecian

(Though she was masqued then as a fair
Venetian), — 1680

CCXI

"Stop!" So I stopped. — But to return:
that which

Men call inconstancy is nothing more
Than admiration due where nature's rich
Profusion with young beauty covers
o'er

Some favored object; and as in the
niche 1685

A lovely statue we almost adore,

This sort of adoration of the real
Is but a heightening of the "beau ideal."

CCXII

'Tis the perception of the beautiful,
A fine extension of the faculties, 1690
Platonic, universal, wonderful,

Drawn from the stars, and filtered
through the skies, —

Without which life would be extremely
dull:

In short, it is the use of our own eyes,
With one or two small senses added,
just 1695

To hint that flesh is formed of fiery dust.

CCXIII

Yet 'tis a painful feeling, and unwilling,
For surely if we always could perceive
In the same object graces quite as killing
As when she rose upon us like an
Eve, 1700

'Twould save us many a heart-ache, many
a shilling

(For we must get them anyhow, or
grieve), —

Whereas, if one sole lady pleased forever,
How pleasant for the heart, as well as
liver!

CCXIV

The heart is like the sky, a part of
heaven, 1705

But changes night and day, too, like
the sky:

Now o'er it clouds and thunder must be
driven,

And darkness and destruction, as on
high;

But when it hath been scorched, and
pierced, and riven,

Its storms expire in water-drops: the
eye 1710

Pours forth at last the heart's blood turned
to tears,

Which make the English climate of our
years.

CCXV

The liver is the lazaret of bile, .
 But very rarely executes its function,
 For the first passion stays there such a
 while 1715
 That all the rest creep in and form a
 junction,
 Like knots of vipers on a dunghill's soil,—
 Rage, fear, hate, jealousy, revenge,
 compunction:
 So that all mischiefs spring up from this
 entail,
 Like earthquakes from the hidden fire
 called "central." 1720

CCXVI

In the mean time, without proceeding
 more
 In this anatomy, I've finished now
 Two hundred and odd stanzas as before,
 That being about the number I'll allow
 Each canto of the twelve, or twenty-
 four; 1725
 And, laying down my pen, I make my
 bow,
 Leaving Don Juan and Haidée to plead
 For them and theirs with all who deign
 to read.

From CANTO THIRD

The Isles of Greece: Ways of Poets
 (1819-20)

LXXXII

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
 In company a very pleasant fellow, 650
 Had been the favorite of full many a mess
 Of men, and made them speeches when
 half mellow;
 And though his meaning they could rarely
 guess,
 Yet still they deigned to hiccup or to
 bellow
 The glorious meed of popular applause, 655
 Of which the first ne'er knows the second
 cause.

LXXXIII

But now being lifted into high society,
 And having picked up several odds and
 ends
 Of free thoughts in his travels for variety,
 He deemed, being in a lone isle, among
 friends, 660
 That, without any danger of a riot, he
 Might for long lying make himself
 amends;
 And, singing as he sung in his warm
 youth,
 Agree to a short armistice with truth.

LXXXIV

He had travelled 'mongst the Arabs,
 Turks, and Franks, 665
 And knew the self-loves of the different
 nations;
 And having lived with people of all ranks,
 Had something ready upon most occa-
 sions —
 Which got him a few presents and some
 thanks.
 He varied with some skill his adula-
 tions: 670
 To "do at Rome as Romans do," a piece
 Of conduct was which he observed in
 Greece.

LXXXV

Thus, usually, when he was asked to sing,
 He gave the different nations something
 national;
 'Twas all the same to him — "God save
 the king," 675
 Or "*Ça ira*," according to the fashion
 all:
 His muse made increment of anything,
 From the high lyric down to the low
 rational;
 If Pindar sang horse-races, what should
 hinder
 Himself from being pliable as Pindar? 680

LXXXVI

In France, for instance, he would write a
 chanson;
 In England, a six canto quarto tale;

In Spain, he'd make a ballad or romance
on

The last war — much the same in Portugal;

In Germany, the Pegasus he'd prance
on 685

Would be old Goethe's (see what says
De Staël);

In Italy, he'd ape the "Trecentisti";

In Greece, he'd sing some sort of hymn
like this t'ye:

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!

Where burning Sappho loved and
sung, 690

Where grew the arts of war and peace, —

Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!

Eternal summer gilds them yet,

But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse, 695

The hero's harp, the lover's lute,

Have found the fame your shores refuse:

Their place of birth alone is mute

To sounds which echo further west

Than your sires' "Islands of the
Blest." 700

The mountains look on Marathon —

And Marathon looks on the sea;

And musing there an hour alone,

I dreamed that Greece might still be
free;

For standing on the Persians' grave, 705

I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow

Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;

And ships, by thousands, lay below,

And men in nations; — all were his! 710

He counted them at break of day —

And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,

My country? On thy voiceless shore

The heroic lay is tuneless now — 715

The heroic bosom beats no more!

And must thy lyre, so long divine,

Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though linked among a fettered
race, 720

To feel at least a patriot's shame,

Even as I sing, suffuse my face;

For what is left the poet here?

For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more
blest? 725

Must *we* but blush? — Our fathers bled.

Earth! render back from out thy breast

A remnant of our Spartan dead!

Of the three hundred grant but three,

To make a new Thermopylæ! 730

What, silent still? and silent all?

Ah! no: the voices of the dead

Sound like a distant torrent's fall,

And answer, "Let one living head,

But one arise, — we come, we come!" 735

'Tis but the living who are dumb.

In vain — in vain: strike other chords;

Fill high the cup with Samian wine!

Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,

And shed the blood of Scio's vine! 740

Hark! rising to the ignoble call —

How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet:

Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?

Of two such lessons, why forget 745

The nobler and the manlier one?

You have the letters Cadmus gave —

Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!

We will not think of themes like
these! 750

It made Anacreon's song divine;

He served — but served Polycrates —

A tyrant; but our masters then

Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese 755

Was freedom's best and bravest friend;

That tyrant was Miltiades!

Oh! that the present hour would lend

Another despot of the kind!

Such chains as his were sure to bind. 760

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!

On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,

Exists the remnant of a line

Such as the Doric mothers bore;

And there, perhaps, some seed is sown 765

The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks,—

They have a king who buys and sells;

In native swords and native ranks,

The only hope of courage dwells; 770

But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,

Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!

Our virgins dance beneath the shade—

I see their glorious black eyes shine: 775

But gazing on each glowing maid,

My own the burning tear-drop laves,

To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,

Where nothing, save the waves and

I, 780

May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;

There, swan-like, let me sing and die:

A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—

Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

LXXXVII

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should
have sung, 785

The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;

If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece
was young,

Yet in these times he might have done
much worse.

His strain displayed some feeling—right
or wrong;

And feeling, in a poet, is the source 790

Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,

And take all colors—like the hands of
dyers.

LXXXVIII

But words are things, and a small drop of
ink,

Falling like dew, upon a thought, pro-
duces

That which makes thousands, perhaps mil-
lions, think; 795

'Tis strange, the shortest letter which
man uses

Instead of speech, may form a lasting link

Of ages: to what straits old Time re-
duces

Frail man when paper—even a rag like
this,

Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's
his! 800

LXXXIX

And when his bones are dust, his grave a
blank,

His station, generation, even his nation,

Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank

In chronological commemoration,—

Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank, 805

Or graven stone found in a barrack's
station

In digging the foundation of a closet,

May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

XC

And glory long has made the sages smile;

'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion,
wind— 810

Depending more upon the historian's style

Than on the name a person leaves be-
hind:

Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to
Hoyle;

The present century was growing blind

To the great Marlborough's skill in giving
knocks, 815

Until his late Life by Archdeacon Cox.

XCI

Milton's the prince of poets—so we say;

A little heavy, but no less divine;

An independent being in his day,—

Learned, pious, temperate in love and
wine: 820

But, his life falling into Johnson's way,

We're told this great high priest of all
the Nine

Was whipt at college — a harsh sire — odd
 spouse,
 For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

XCH

All these are, *certainly*, entertaining facts 825
 Like Shakespere's stealing deer, Lord
 Bacon's bribes;
 Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest
 acts;
 Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well
 describes);
 Like Cromwell's pranks; — but although
 truth exacts
 These amiable descriptions from the
 scribes, 830
 As most essential to their hero's story,
 They do not much contribute to his glory.

XCIII

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
 He prated to the world of "Pantisoc-
 racy,"
 Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who
 then 835
 Seasoned his pedlar poems with democ-
 racy;
 Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
 Let to the *Morning Post* its aristocracy;
 When he and Southey, following the same
 path,
 Espoused two partners (milliners of
 Bath). 840

XCIV

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
 The very Botany Bay in moral geogra-
 phy:
 Their royal treason, renegado rigor,
 Are good manure for their more bare
 biography.
 Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is
 bigger 845
 Than any since the birthday of typogra-
 phy, —
 A drowsy frowzy poem, called *The Ex-
 cursion*,
 Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

XCV

He there builds up a formidable dyke
 Between his own and others' intellect: 850
 But Wordsworth's poem, and his follow-
 ers, like
 Joanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect,
 Are things which in this century don't
 strike
 The public mind, — so few are the elect;
 And the new births of both their stale
 virginities 855
 Have proved but dropsies, taken for divin-
 ities.

XCVI

But let me to my story; I must own,
 If I have any fault, it is digression, —
 Leaving my people to proceed alone,
 While I soliloquize beyond expres-
 sion: 860
 But these are my addresses from the
 throne,
 Which put off business to the ensuing
 session, —
 Forgetting each omission is a loss to
 The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

XCVII

I know that what our neighbors call
 "*longueurs*" 865
 (We've not so good a *word*, but have
 the *thing*
 In that complete perfection which insures
 An epic from Bob Southey every spring),
 Form not the true temptation which al-
 lures
 The reader; but 'twould not be hard
 to bring 870
 Some fine examples of the *épopée*,
 To prove its grand ingredient is *ennui*.

XCVIII

We learn from Horace, "Homer some-
 times sleeps";
 We feel without him, Wordsworth
 sometimes wakes, —
 To show with what complacency he
 creeps, 875
 With his dear "*Waggoners*," around his
 lakes.

He wishes for "a boat" to sail the deeps —
 Of ocean? — No, of air; and then he
 makes
 Another outcry for "a little boat,"
 And drivels seas to set it well afloat. 880

XCIX

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal
 plain,
 And Pegasus runs restive in his
 "Waggon,"
 Could he not beg the loan of Charles's
 Wain?
 Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
 Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain, 885
 He feared his neck to venture such a
 nag on,
 And he must needs mount nearer to the
 moon,
 Could not the blockhead ask for a bal-
 loon?

C

"Pedlars," and "Boats," and "Waggon!"
 Oh! ye shades
 Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to
 this? 890
 That trash of such sort not alone evades
 Contempt, but from the bathos' vast
 abyss
 Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack
 Cades
 Of sense and song above your graves
 may hiss —
 The "little boatman" and his "Peter
 Bell" 895
 Can sneer at him who drew "Achito-
 phel!"

From CANTO FOURTH

The Author's Purpose

(1819-20)

I

Nothing so difficult as a beginning
 In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
 For oftentimes when Pegasus seems win-
 ning

The race, he sprains a wing, and down
 we tend,
 Like Lucifer, when hurled from heaven for
 sinning, — 3
 Our sin the same, and hard as his to
 men,
 Being pride, which leads the mind to soar
 too far,
 Till our own weakness shows us what we
 are.)

II

But Time, which brings all beings to their
 level,
 And sharp Adversity, will teach at
 last 10
 Man, and — as we would hope — perhaps
 the devil,
 That neither of their intellects are vast:
 While youth's hot wishes in our red veins
 revel,
 We know not this — the blood flows on
 too fast;
 But as the torrent widens towards the
 ocean, 15
 We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

III

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
 And wished that others held the same
 opinion;
 They took it up, when my days grew more
 mellow,
 And other minds acknowledged my do-
 minion: 20
 Now my sere fancy "falls into the yellow
 Leaf," and Imagination droops her
 pinion,
 And the sad truth which hovers o'er my
 desk
 Turns what was once romantic to bur-
 lesque.

IV

And if I laugh at any mortal thing, 25
 'Tis that I may not weep; and if I weep,
 'Tis that our nature cannot always bring
 Itself to apathy, for we must steep

Our hearts first in the depth of Lethe's
spring,

Ere what we least wish to behold will
sleep: 30

Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

v

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the
land,

And trace it in this poem every line: 35

I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be *very*
fine;

But the fact is that I have nothing
planned

Unless it were to be a moment merry, —
A novel word in my vocabulary. 40

vi

To the kind reader of our sober clime

This way of writing will appear exotic:
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when chivalry was more
Quixotic,

And revelled in the fancies of the time, — 45

True knights, chaste dames, huge giants,
kings despotic;

But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet.

vii

How I have treated it, I do not know;

Perhaps no better than they have treated
me 50

Who have imputed such designs as show
Not what they saw, but what they
wished to see:

But if it gives them pleasure, be it so;
This is a liberal age, and thoughts are
free:

Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear, 55
And tells me to resume my story here.

WHEN A MAN HATH NO
FREEDOM

(1820)

When a man hath no freedom to fight
for at home,

Let him combat for that of his neigh-
bors;

Let him think of the glories of Greece
and of Rome,

And get knocked on the head for his
labors.

To do good to mankind is the chivalrous
plan, 5

And is always as nobly required;

Then battle for freedom wherever you
can,

And, if not shot or hanged, you'll get
knighted.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

(1824)

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,

Since others it hath ceased to move:

Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf; 5

The flowers and fruits of love are gone;

The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys

Is lone as some volcanic isle; 10

No torch is kindled at its blaze —
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,

The exalted portion of the pain

And power of love, I cannot share, 15
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus* — and 'tis not *here* —

Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor
now,

Where glory decks the hero's bier,

Or binds his brow. 20

The sword, the banner, and the field,
 Glory and Greece, around me see!
 The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
 Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece — she *is* awake!) 25
 Awake, my spirit! Think through
whom

Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
 And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
 Unworthy manhood! — unto thee 30
 Indifferent should the smile or frown
 Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why live?*
 The land of honorable death
 Is here: — up to the field, and give 35
 Away thy breath!

Seek out — less often sought than found —
 A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
 Then look around, and choose thy ground,
 And take thy rest. 40

J. C. MANGAN (1803-1849)

THE NAMELESS ONE (c. 1842)

Roll forth, my song, like the rushing river,
 That sweeps along to the mighty sea;
 God will inspire me while I deliver
 My soul of thee!

Tell thou the world, when my bones lie
 whitening 5
 Amid the last homes of youth and eld,
 That once there was one whose veins
 ran lightning
 No eye beheld.

Tell how his boyhood was one drear night-
 hour, —
 How shone for him, through his grief
 and gloom, 10
 No star of all heaven sends to light our
 Path to the tomb.

Roll on, my song, and to after ages
 Tell how, disdaining all earth can give,
 He would have taught men, from wis-
 dom's pages, 15
 The way to live.

And tell how, trampled, derided, hated,
 And worn by weakness, disease, and
 wrong,
 He fled for shelter to God, who mated
 His soul with song — 20

With song which alway, sublime or vapid,
 Flowed like a rill in the morning-beam,
 Perchance not deep, but intense and
 rapid, —
 A mountain stream.

Tell how this Nameless, condemned for
 years long 25
 To herd with demons from hell beneath,
 Saw things that made him, with groans
 and tears, long
 For even death.

Go on to tell how, with genius wasted,
 Betrayed in friendship, befooled in
 love, 30
 With spirit shipwrecked, and young hopes
 blasted,
 He still, still strove;

Till spent with toil, dreeing death for
 others,
 And some whose hands should have
 wrought for him
 (If children live not for sires and
 mothers), 35
 His mind grew dim;

And he fell far through that pit abysmal,
 The gulf and grave of Maginn and
 Burns,
 And pawned his soul for the devil's dis-
 mal
 Stock of returns; 40

But yet redeemed it in days of darkness,
 And shapes and signs of the final wrath,
 When death, in hideous and ghastly stark-
 ness,
 Stood on his path.

And tell how now, amid wreck and sor-
row, ⁴⁵
And want, and sickness, and houseless
nights,
He bides in calmness the silent morrow,
That no ray lights.

And lives he still, then? Yes! Old and
hoary
At thirty-nine, from despair and
woe, — ⁵⁰
He lives, enduring what future story
Will never know.

Him grant a grave to, ye pitying noble,
Deep in your bosoms: there let him
dwell!
He, too, had tears for all souls in
trouble ⁵⁵
Here, and in hell.

T. L. PEACOCK (1785-1866)

THERE IS A FEVER OF THE SPIRIT

(*Song from Nightmare Abbey, 1818:*
Chapter xi)

There is a fever of the spirit,
The brand of Cain's unresting doom,
Which in the lone dark souls that bear it
Glow like the lamp in Tullia's tomb:
Unlike that lamp, its subtle fire ⁵
Burns, blasts, consumes its cell, the
heart,
Till, one by one, hope, joy, desire,
Like dreams of shadowy smoke depart.
When hope, love, life itself, are only
Dust — spectral memories — dead and
cold — ¹⁰
The unfed fire burns bright and lonely,
Like that undying lamp of old:
And by that drear illumination,
Till time its clay-built home has rent,
Thought broods on feeling's desola-
tion — ¹⁵
The soul is its own monument.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

TO HARRIET— (*Dedication of Queen Mab, 1812-13*)

Whose is the love that, gleaming through
the world,
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its
scorn?

Whose is the warm and partial praise,
Virtue's most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving
soul ⁵
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?

Harriet! on thine: — thou wert my purer
mind;
Thou wert the inspiration of my song; 10
Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledge of
love;
And know, though time may change and
years may roll,
Each floweret gathered in my heart ¹⁵
It consecrates to thine.

TO WORDSWORTH (1815)

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may re-
turn:
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's
first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee
to mourn.
These common woes I feel. One loss is
mine ⁵
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did
shine
On some frail bark in winter's midnight
roar:

Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
 Above the blind and battling multitude: 10
 In honored poverty thy voice did weave
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty —
 Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
 Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease
 to be.

From ALASTOR

Invocation to Nature
 (1815)

Earth, Ocean, Air, belovèd brotherhood!
 If our great Mother has imbued my soul
 With aught of natural piety to feel
 Your love, and recompense the boon with
 mine;
 If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and
 even, 5
 With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
 And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
 If Autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
 And Winter robing with pure snow and
 crowns
 Of starry ice the gray grass and bare
 boughs; 10
 If Spring's voluptuous pantings when she
 breathes
 Her first sweet kisses — have been dear to
 me;
 If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
 I consciously have injured, but still loved
 And cherished these my kindred; then 15
 This boast, belovèd brethren, and with-
 draw
 No portion of your wonted favor now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!
 Favor my solemn song, for I have loved
 Thee ever, and thee only; I have
 watched 20
 Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy
 steps,
 And my heart ever gazes on the depth
 Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my
 bed

In charnals and on coffins, where black
 death
 Keeps record of the trophies won from
 thee, 25
 Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
 Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone
 ghost,
 Thy messenger, to render up the tale
 Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
 When night makes a weird sound of its
 own stillness, 30
 Like an inspired and desperate alchemist
 Staking his very life on some dark hope
 Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
 With my most innocent love, until strange
 tears,
 Uniting with those breathless kisses,
 made 35
 Such magic as compels the charmed night
 To render up thy charge; and, though
 ne'er yet
 Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
 Enough from incommunicable dream,
 And twilight phantasms, and deep noonday
 thought, 40
 Has shone within me, that serenely now
 And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
 Suspended in the solitary dome
 Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
 I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my
 strain 45
 May modulate with murmurs of the air,
 And motions of the forests and the sea,
 And voice of living beings, and woven
 hymns
 Of night and day, and the deep heart of
 man.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL
 BEAUTY

(1816)

I

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
 Floats though unseen amongst us, visit-
 ing
 This various world with as inconstant
 wing

As summer winds that creep from flower
to flower;—

Like moonbeams that behind some piny
mountain shower, 5

It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;

Like hues and harmonies of evening,
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
Like memory of music fled,— 10
Like aught that for its grace may
be

Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

II

Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine
upon

Of human thought or form,—where
art thou gone? 15

Why dost thou pass away and leave our
state,

This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and
desolate?—

Ask why the sunlight not forever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain
river,

Why aught should fail and fade that once
is shown, 20

Why fear and dream and death and
birth

Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom,—why man has such a
scope

For love and hate, despondency and hope?

III

No voice from some sublimer world hath
ever 25

To sage or poet these responses given;
Therefore the names of Dæmon, Ghost,
and Heaven

Remain the records of their vain en-
deavor,—

Frail spells, whose uttered charm might
not avail to sever,

From all we hear and all we see, 30
Doubt, chance, and mutability.

Thy light alone,—like mist o'er moun-
tains driven,

Or music by the night wind sent
Through strings of some still instru-
ment,

Or moonlight on a midnight
stream,— 35

Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet
dream.

IV

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem like clouds
depart

And come, for some uncertain moments
lent.

Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou
art, 40

Keep with thy glorious train firm state
within his heart.

Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes!

Thou, that to human thought art nourish-
ment,

Like darkness to a dying flame! 45

Depart not as thy shadow came,

Depart not,—lest the grave should
be,

Like life and fear, a dark reality!

V

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and
sped

Through many a listening chamber, cave
and ruin, 50

And starlight wood, with fearful steps
pursuing

Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.

I called on poisonous names with which
our youth is fed;

I was not heard, I saw them not—

When, musing deeply on the lot 55
Of life, at the sweet time when winds are
wooing

All vital things that wake to bring

News of birds and blossoming,—

Sudden, thy shadow fell on me:

I shrieked, and clasped my hands in
ecstasy! 60

VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine — have I not kept the
vow?

With beating heart and streaming eyes,
even now

I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have
in visioned bowers 65

Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious
night —

They know that never joy illumed my
brow

Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst
free

This world from its dark slav-
ery, — 70

That thou, O awful Loveliness,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot
express.

VII

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past — there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky, 75
Which through the summer is not heard or
seen,

As if it could not be, as if it had not
been!

Thus let thy power, which like the
truth

Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply 80
Its calm, — to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,

Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

TO MARY — —

(Dedication of The Revolt of Islam,
1817)

I

So now my summer task is ended, Mary,
And I return to thee, mine own heart's
home;

As to his queen some victor knight of
faëry,

Earning bright spoils for her enchanted
dome;

Nor thou disdain that, ere my fame
become 5

A star among the stars of mortal night, —
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom, —
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
With thy beloved name, thou child of
love and light.

II

The toil which stole from thee so many
an hour 10

Is ended — and the fruit is at thy feet!
No longer where the woods to frame a
bower

With interlacèd branches mix and meet, —
Or where, with sound like many voices
sweet,

Waterfalls leap among wild islands
green 15

Which framed for my lone boat a lone
retreat

Of moss-grown trees and weeds, — shall
I be seen:

But beside thee, where still my heart has
ever been.

III

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear
Friend, when first

The clouds which wrap this world from
youth did pass. 20

I do remember well the hour which burst
My spirit's sleep. A fresh May-dawn it
was,

When I walked forth upon the glittering
grass,

And wept, I knew not why: until there
rose

From the near schoolroom voices that,
alas! 25

Were but one echo from a world of
woes —

The harsh and grating strife of tyrants
and of foes.

IV

And then I clasped my hands, and looked
around,
But none was near to mock my streaming
eyes,
Which poured their warm drops on the
sunny ground — 30
So, without shame, I spake: — "I will be
wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
Without reproach or check." I then con-
trolled 35
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I
was meek and bold.

V

And from that hour did I with earnest
thought
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of
lore;
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or
taught
I cared to learn, but from that secret
store 40
Wrought linkèd armor for my soul, before
It might walk forth to war among man-
kind:
Thus power and hope were strengthened
more and more
Within me, till there came upon my mind
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which
I pined. 45

VI

Alas that love should be a blight and
snare
To those who seek all sympathies in
one! —
Such once I sought in vain; then black
despair,
The shadow of a starless night, was
thrown
Over the world in which I moved
alone: — 50
Yet never found I one not false to me,
Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of
icy stone

Which crushed and withered mine, that
could not be
Aught but a lifeless clog, until revived
by thee.

VII

Thou Friend, whose presence on my
wintry heart 55
Fell, like bright Spring upon some herbless
plain:
How beautiful and calm and free thou
wert
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal
chain
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in
twain,
And walk as free as light the clouds
among, 60
Which many an envious slave then
breathed in vain
From his dim dungeon, — and my spirit
sprung
To meet thee from the woes which had
begirt it long!

VIII

No more alone through the world's wilder-
ness,
Although I trod the paths of high in-
tent, 65
I journeyed now: no more companionless,
Where solitude is like despair, I went. —
There is the wisdom of a stern content
When Poverty can blight the just and
good,
When Infamy dares mock the innocent, 70
And cherished friends turn with the mul-
titude
To trample: this was ours, and we un-
shaken stood!

IX

Now has descended a serener hour,
And, with inconstant fortune, friends re-
turn;
Though suffering leaves the knowledge
and the power 75
Which says, Let scorn be not repaid
with scorn.

And from thy side two gentle babes are
born
To fill our home with smiles, and thus
are we
Most fortunate beneath life's beaming
morn:
And these delights, and thou, have been
to me
The parents of the song I consecrate to
thee.

X

Is it that now my inexperienced fingers
But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?
Or must the lyre on which my spirit
lingers
Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound
again, — 85
Though it might shake the Anarch Cus-
tom's reign,
And charm the minds of men to Truth's
own sway,
Holier than was Amphion's? I would
fain
Reply in hope — but I am worn away,
And Death and Love are yet contending
for their prey. 90

XI

And what art thou? I know, but dare
not speak:
Time may interpret to his silent years.
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful
cheek,
And in the light thine ample forehead
wears,
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy
tears, 95
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears;
And, through thine eyes, even in thy soul
I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

XII

They say that thou wert lovely from thy
birth, 100
Of glorious parents thou aspiring child!

I wonder not — for one then left this
earth
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
Which clothed thee in the radiance un-
defiled
Of its departing glory; still her fame 105
Shines on thee, through the tempests dark
and wild
Which shake these latter days; and thou
canst claim
The shelter, from thy sire, of an im-
mortal name.

XIII

One voice came forth from many a mighty
spirit,
Which was the echo of three thousand
years; 110
And the tumultuous world stood mute
to hear it,
As some lone man who in a desert hears
The music of his home: — unwonted fears
Fell on the pale oppressors of our race;
And Faith and Custom and low-thoughted
cares, 115
Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a
space
Left the torn human heart, their food
and dwelling-place.

XIV

Truth's deathless voice pauses among
mankind!
If there must be no response to my cry —
If men must rise and stamp, with fury
blind, 120
On his pure name who loves them — thou
and I,
Sweet friend! can look from our tran-
quillity
Like lamps into the world's tempestuous
night, —
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are pass-
ing by
Which wrap them from the foundering
seaman's sight, 125
That burn from year to year with unex-
tinguished light.

OZYMANDIAS

(1817)

I met a traveller from an antique land,
 Who said: — "Two vast and trunkless legs
 of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the
 sand,
 Half-sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose
 frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold com-
 mand, 5
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions
 read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these life-
 less things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart
 that fed:
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 'My name is Ozymandias, king of
 kings: 10
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and
 despair!'
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far
 away."

LINES TO A CRITIC

(1817)

Honey from silkworms who can gather,
 Or silk from the yellow bee?
 The grass may grow in winter weather
 As soon as hate in me.
 Hate men who cant, and men who pray, 5
 And men who rail like thee;
 An equal passion to repay
 They are not coy like me.
 Or seek some slave of power and gold,
 To be thy dear heart's mate; 10
 Thy love will move that bigot cold
 Sooner than me thy hate.
 A passion like the one I prove
 Cannot divided be;
 I hate thy want of truth and love — 15
 How should I then hate thee?

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

(1818)

I

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
 The waves are dancing fast and bright;
 Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
 The purple noon's transparent might;
 The breath of the moist earth is light 5
 Around its unexpanded buds;
 Like many a voice of one delight,
 The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
 The City's voice itself is soft like Soli-
 tude's.

II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor 10
 With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
 I see the waves upon the shore,
 Like light dissolved in star-showers,
 thrown;
 I sit upon the sands alone —
 The lightning of the noontide ocean 15
 Is flashing round me, and a tone
 Arises from its measured motion,
 How sweet! did any heart now share in-
 my emotion.

III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
 Nor peace within nor calm around, 20
 Nor that content surpassing wealth
 The sage in meditation found,
 And walked with inward glory crowned, —
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor lei-
 sure.
 Others I see whom these surround — 25
 Smiling they live, and call life pleasure; —
 To me that cup has been dealt in another
 measure.

IV

Yet now despair itself is mild;
 Even as the winds and waters are;
 I could lie down like a tired child, 30
 And weep away the life of care
 Which I have borne and yet must bear —

Till death like sleep might steal on me,
 And I might feel in the warm air
 My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea 35
 Breathe o'er my dying brain its last mo-
 notony.

v

Some might lament that I were cold,
 As I, when this sweet day is gone,
 Which my lost heart, too soon grown
 old,
 Insults with this untimely moan; 40
 They might lament — for I am one
 Whom men love not, — and yet regret,
 Unlike this day, which, when the sun
 Shall on its stainless glory set,
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in
 memory yet. 45

LIFT NOT THE PAINTED VEIL

(1818)

Lift not the painted veil which those who
 live
 Call Life; though unreal shapes be pictured
 there,
 And it but mimic all we would believe
 With colors idly spread, — behind, lurk
 Fear
 And Hope, twin Destinies, who ever
 weave 5
 Their shadows o'er the chasm sightless and
 drear.
 I knew one who had lifted it — he sought,
 For his lost heart was tender, things to
 love,
 But found them not, alas! nor was there
 aught
 The world contains the which he could
 approve. 10
 Through the unheeding many he did
 move
 A splendor among shadows, a bright blot
 Upon this gloomy scene, a spirit that
 strove
 For truth, and like the Preacher found it
 not.

ENGLAND IN 1819

(1819)

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying
 king;
 Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who
 flow
 Through public scorn, — mud from a
 muddy spring;
 Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor
 know,
 But leech-like to their fainting country
 cling, 5
 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a
 blow;
 A people starved and stabbed in the un-
 tilled field;
 An army, which liberticide and prey
 Makes as a two-edged sword to all who
 wield;
 Golden and sanguine laws which tempt
 and slay; 10
 Religion Christless, Godless, — a book
 sealed;
 A Senate — Time's worst statute unre-
 pealed:
 Are graves, from which a glorious Phan-
 tom may
 Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

(1819)

The fountains mingle with the river,
 And the rivers with the ocean;
 The winds of heaven mix for ever
 With a sweet emotion;
 Nothing in the world is single; 5
 All things by a law divine
 In one spirit meet and mingle:
 Why not I with thine?
 See the mountains kiss high heaven,
 And the waves clasp one another; 10
 No sister-flower would be forgiven
 If it disdained its brother;
 And the sunlight clasps the earth,
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
 What are all these kissings worth 15
 If thou kiss not me?

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

(1819)

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
 Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, 5
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
 The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
 Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill 10
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
 With living hues and odors plain and hill:
 Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere, —
 Destroyer and preserver, — hear! oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion, 15
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,
 Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
 On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20
 Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
 Of the dying year, to which this closing night
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, 25
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
 Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst:
 oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,
 Beside a pumice isle in Baia's bay,
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
 All overgrown with azure moss and flowers 35
 So sweet the sense faints picturing them:
 thou
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
 Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
 The sapless foliage of the ocean know 40
 Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
 And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45
 The impulse of thy strength, only less free
 Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be
 The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
 As then, when to outstrip thy skyeey speed 50
 Scarce seemed a vision: I would ne'er have striven
 As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
 Oh lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
 I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
 A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed 55
 One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

v

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its
own!

The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal
tone, 60

Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit
fierce,

My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new
birth!

And, by the incantation of this verse, 65
Scatter,—as from an unextinguished
hearth

Ashes and sparks,—my words among
mankind!

Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far be-
hind? 70

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

(1818-19)

ACT FIRST

SCENE:—*A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the
Indian Caucasus. PROMETHEUS is dis-
covered bound to the Precipice. PAN-
THEA and IONE are seated at his feet.
Time, night. During the Scene, morn-
ing slowly breaks.*

Prometheus. Monarch of Gods and
Dæmons, and all spirits
But One, who throng those bright and
rolling worlds

Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this
Earth

Made multitudinous with thy slaves,
whom thou 5

Requiest for knee-worship, prayer, and
praise,

And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren
hope;

Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in
hate

Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy
scorn, 10

O'er mine own misery and thy vain re-
venge.

Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered
hours,

And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years,—torture and
solitude,

Scorn and despair,—these are mine
empire:— 15

More glorious far than that which thou
surveyest

From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty
God—

Almighty, had I deigned to share the
shame

Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling moun-
tain, 20

Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured,—with-
out herb,

Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I
endure.

I ask the Earth, have not the mountains
felt? 25

I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or
calm,—

Heaven's ever-changing shadow, spread
below,—

Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas! pain, pain ever, for ever! 30

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the
spears

Of their moon-freezing crystals; the
bright chains

Eat with their burning cold into my bones;
Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from
thy lips

His beak in poison not his own, tears up 35
My heart; and shapeless sights come wan-
dering by,

The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me; and the Earthquake-fiends
are charged

To wrench the rivets from my quivering
wounds

When the rocks split and close again be-
hind; 40

While from their loud abysses howling
throng

The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen
hail.

And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the
morn, 45

Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-colored east; for then they
lead

The wingless, crawling hours, one among
whom

— As some dark priest hales the reluctant
victim —

Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the
blood 50

From these pale feet, which then might
trample thee

If they disdained not such a prostrate
slave.

Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended through the
wide heaven!

How will thy soul, cloven to its depth
with terror, 55

Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,

As then ere misery made me wise. The
curse

Once breathed on thee, I would recall. Ye
Mountains,

Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the
mist 60

Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that
spell!

Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling
frost,

Which vibrated to hear me, and then
crept

Shuddering through India! Thou serenest
Air,

Through which the Sun walks burning
without beams! 65

And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poised
wings

Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed
abyss,

As thunder, louder than your own, made
rock

The orbèd world! If then my words had
power,

Though I am changed so that aught evil
wish 70

Is dead within; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!

What was that curse? for ye all heard me
speak.

First Voice (from the Mountains)

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood: 75

Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

Second Voice (from the Springs)

Thunderbolts had parched our water,
We had been stained with bitter blood,

And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of
slaughter, 80

Through a city and a solitude.

Third Voice (from the Air)

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colors not their own,

And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan. 85

Fourth Voice (from the Whirlwinds)

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,

Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under

Ever made us mute with wonder. 90

First Voice

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

Second Voice

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.

A pilot asleep on the howling sea 95
 Leaped up from the deck in agony,
 And heard, and cried, "Ah, woe is me!"
 And died as mad as the wild waves be.

Third Voice

By such dread words from Earth to
 Heaven
 My still realm was never riven; 100
 When its wound was closed, there stood
 Darkness o'er the day like blood.

Fourth Voice

And we shrank back; for dreams of ruin
 To frozen caves our flight pursuing
 Made us keep silence — thus — and
 thus — 105
 Though silence is a hell to us.

The Earth. The tongueless caverns of
 the craggy hills
 Cried "Misery!" then; the hollow Heaven
 replied,
 "Misery!" and the Ocean's purple waves,
 Climbing the land, howled to the lashing
 winds, — 110
 And the pale nations heard it, — "Mis-
 ery!"

Prometheus. I hear a sound of voices:
 not the voice
 Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons
 and thou
 Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
 Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove, 115
 Both they and thou had vanished, like thin
 mist
 Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye
 not me,
 The Titan? He who made his agony
 The barrier to your else all-conquering
 foe?
 O rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed
 streams, 120
 Now seen athwart frore vapors, deep be-
 low,
 Through whose o'ershadowing woods I
 wandered once
 With Asia, drinking life from her loved
 eyes, —

Why scorns the spirit which informs ye,
 now

To commune with me? me alone, who
 checked, 125
 As one who checks a fiend-drawn char-
 ioteer,

The falsehood and the force of him who
 reigns
 Supreme, and with the groans of pining
 slaves
 Fills your dim glens and liquid wilder-
 nesses:

Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

The Earth. They dare not. 130
Prometheus. Who dares? for I would
 hear that curse again.

Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!
 'Tis scarce like sound; it tingles through
 the frame

As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.
 Speak, Spirit; from thine inorganic voice 135
 I only know that thou art moving near
 And love. How cursed I him?

The Earth. How canst thou hear
 Who knowest not the language of the
 dead?

Prometheus. Thou art a living spirit:
 speak as they.

The Earth. I dare not speak like life,
 lest Heaven's fell King 140
 Should hear, and link me to some wheel of
 pain

More torturing than the one whereon I
 roll.

Subtle thou art and good, and though the
 Gods

Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than
 God,

Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken
 now. 145

Prometheus. Obscurely through my
 brain, like shadows dim,
 Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I
 feel

Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;
 Yet 'tis not pleasure.

The Earth. No, thou canst not hear;
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is
 known 150

Only to those who die.

Prometheus. And what art thou,
O, melancholy Voice?

The Earth. I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen
air, 155

Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a
cloud

Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting
dust, 160

And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee
here.

Then—see those million worlds which
burn and roll

Around us—their inhabitants beheld
My sphered light wane in wide heaven; the
sea 165

Was lifted by strange tempest, and new
fire

From earthquake-rifted mountains of
bright snow

Shook its portentous hair beneath
Heaven's frown;

Lightning and Inundation vexed the
plains;

Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless
toads 170

Within voluptuous chambers panting
crawled.

When Plague had fallen on man and beast
and worm,

And Famine; and black blight on herb and
tree;

And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-
grass

Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds 175
Draining their growth, for my wan breast
was dry

With grief; and the thin air, my breath,
was stained

With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer—ay, I
heard

Thy curse,—the which, if thou remem-
berest not, 180

Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon
wide air,

And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate,
In secret joy and hope, those dreadful
words, 185

But dare not speak them.

Prometheus. Venerable mother!
All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and
happy sounds,

And love, though fleeting; these may not
be mine.

But mine own words, I pray, deny me
not. 190

The Earth. They shall be told. Ere
Babylon was dust,

The Magus Zoroaster, my dear child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.

For know, there are two worlds, of life
and death: 195

One that which thou beholdest; but the
other

Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and
live,

Till death unite them and they part no
more:

Dreams and the light imaginings of
men, 200

And all that fate creates or love desires,—
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous
shapes.

There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing
shade,

'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the
gods

Are there, and all the powers of nameless
worlds,— 205

Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and
beasts;

And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall
utter

The curse which all remember. Call at
will 210

Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier gods
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin,
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate
sons.

Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge 215
Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant
shades,

As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.

Prometheus. Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil, pass again
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear! 221

Ione

My wings are folded o'er mine ears,
My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes
Yet through their silver shade appears,
And through their lulling plumes
arise, 225

A Shape, a throng of sounds.

May it be no ill to thee,

O thou of many wounds!

Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake. 230

Panthea

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains
cloven;

The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.

A sceptre of pale gold, 235

To stay steps proud, o'er the slow
cloud,

His veined hand doth hold.

Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

Phantasm of Jupiter. Why have
the secret powers of this strange
world 240

Driven me, a frail and empty phantom,
hither

On direst storms? What unaccustomed
sounds

Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly
talk

In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who
art thou? 245

Prometheus. Tremendous Image! as
thou art must be

He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his
foe,

The Titan. Speak the words which I
would hear,

Although no thought inform thine empty
voice.

The Earth. Listen! And though your
echoes must be mute, 250

Gray mountains, and old woods, and
haunted springs,

Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding
streams,

Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

Phantasm. A spirit seizes me and speaks
within: 254

It tears me as fire tears a thunder-
cloud.

Panthea. See, how he lifts his mighty
looks! the Heaven

Darkens above.

Ione. He speaks! O shelter me!

Prometheus. I see the curse on gestures
proud and cold,

And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with
smiles, 260

Written as on a scroll: yet speak! oh
speak!

Phantasm

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed
mind,

All that thou canst inflict I bid thee
do;

Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-
kind,

One only being shalt thou not sub-
due. 265

Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire

Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned
forms 270
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding
storms.

Ay, do thy worst! Thou art omnipo-
tent:

O'er all things but thyself I gave thee
power,

And my own will. Be thy swift mis-
chiefs sent

To blast mankind, from yon ethereal
tower. 275

Let thy malignant spirit move

In darkness over those I love:

On me and mine I imprecate

The utmost torture of thy hate;

And thus devote to sleepless agony, 280

This undeclying head, while thou must
reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord:
O thou,

Who fillest with thy soul this world
of woe,

To whom all things of Earth and
Heaven do bow

In fear and worship: all-prevailing
foe! 285

I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse

Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;

Till thine Infinity shall be

A robe of envenomed agony;

And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,

To cling like burning gold round thy dis-
solving brain. 291

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this curse,

Ill deeds, then be thou damned, be-
holding good;

Both infinite as is the universe,

And thou, and thy self-torturing soli-
tude. 295

An awful image of calm power

Though now thou sittest, let the hour

Come, when thou must appear to be

That which thou art internally.

And after many a false and fruitless
crime, 300

Scorn track thy lagging fall through
boundless space and time.

Prometheus. Were these my words, O,
Parent?

The Earth. They were thine.

Prometheus. It doth repent me: words
are quick and vain;

Grief for awhile is blind, and so was
mine.

I wish no living thing to suffer pain. 305

The Earth

Misery, oh misery to me,

That Jove at length should vanquish
thee.

Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,

The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.

Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,

Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and
vanquishèd. 311

First Echo

Lies fallen and vanquishèd!

Second Echo

Fallen and vanquishèd!

Ione

Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,

The Titan is unvanquished still. 315

But see, where through the azure chasm

Of yon forked and snowy hill,

Trampling the slant winds on high

With golden-sandalled feet, that glow

Under plumes of purple dye, 320

Like rose-ensanguined ivory,

A Shape comes now,

Stretching on high from his right hand

A serpent-cinctured wand.

Panthea

'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mer-
cury. 325

Ione

And who are those with hydra tresses

And iron wings that climb the wind,

Whom the frowning God represses,—

Like vapors steaming up behind,

Clanging loud, an endless crowd? 330

Panthea

These are Jove's tempest-walking
hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

Ione

Are they now led, from the thin dead 335
On new fangs to be fed?

Panthea

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

First Fury. Ha! I scent life!

Second Fury. Let me but
look into his eyes!

Third Fury. The hope of torturing him
smells like a heap

Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle. 340

First Fury. Darest thou delay, O
Herald! take cheer, Hounds

Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport — who can
please long

The Omnipotent?

Mercury. Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and
vail, 345

Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and
Gorgon,

Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of
fiends

Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's pois-
oned wine,

Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.

First Fury. Oh, mercy! mercy! 350
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

Mercury. Crouch then in silence.

Awful Sufferer

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven
down,

To execute a doom of new revenge. 355
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself

That I can do no more: aye from thy
sight

Returning, for a season, Heaven seems
Hell,

So thy worn form pursues me night and
day,

Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm
and good, 360

But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in
strife

Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear
lamps,

That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have
taught

And long must teach. Even now thy
Torturer arms 365

With the strange might of unimagined
pains

The powers who scheme slow agonies in
Hell;

And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage
fiends

People the abyss, and leave them to their
task. 370

Be it not so! there is a secret known
To thee, and to none else of living
things,

Which may transfer the sceptre of wide
Heaven,

The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his
throne 375

In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous
fane,

Let the will kneel within thy haughty
heart:

For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.

Prometheus. Evil minds 380
Change good to their own nature. I gave
all

He has; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day: whether the
Sun

Split my parched skin, or in the moony
night

The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my
hair: 385

Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.

Such is the tyrant's recompense. 'Tis just.

He who is evil can receive no good;
And for a world bestowed, or a friend
lost, 390

He can feel hate, fear, shame,—not
gratitude.

He but requites me for his own misdeed.
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which
breaks

With bitter stings the light sleep of Re-
venge.

Submission, thou dost know I cannot
try: 395

For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,—
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown,—would
he accept,

Or could I yield? Which yet I will not
yield. 400

Let others flatter Crime, where it sits
throned

In brief Omnipotence; secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep
down

Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I
wait, 405

Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamor: fear
delay:

Behold! Heaven lowers under thy
Father's frown.

Mercury. Oh, that we might be
spared: I to inflict, 410

And thou to suffer! Once more answer
me:

Thou knowest not the period of Jove's
power?

Prometheus. I know but this, that it
must come.

Mercury. Alas!
Thou canst not count thy years to come of
pain!

Prometheus. They last while Jove must
reign: nor more, nor less 415

Do I desire or fear.

Mercury. Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight, 420
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless:
Perchance it has not numbered the slow
years

Which thou must spend in torture, unre-
prieved!

Prometheus. Perchance no thought can
count them, yet they pass.

Mercury. If thou might'st dwell
among the Gods the while, 425
Lapped in voluptuous joy?

Prometheus. I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

Mercury. Alas! I wonder at, yet pity
thee.

Prometheus. Pity the self-despising
slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace
serene, 430

As light in the sun, throned. How vain is
talk!

Call up the fiends.

Ione. O sister, look! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-
loaded cedar;
How fearfully God's thunder howls be-
hind!

Mercury. I must obey his words and
thine. Alas! 435

Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

Panthea. See where the child of
Heaven, with wingèd feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the
dawn.

Ione. Dear sister, close thy plumes over
thine eyes

Lest thou behold and die: they come—
they come— 440

Blackening the birth of day with countless
wings,

And hollow underneath, like death.

First Fury. Prometheus!

Second Fury. Immortal Titan!

Third Fury. Champion of
Heaven's slaves!

Panthea

These are Jove's tempest-walking
hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

Ione

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And gnash, beside the streams of fire and
wail, 345

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Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's pois-
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all

He has; and in return he chains me here
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Sun

Split my parched skin, or in the moony
night

The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my
hair: 385

Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.

O ye who shake hills with the scream of
your mirth

When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye
Who with wingless footsteps trample the
sea, 500

And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's
track

Sit chattering with joy on the foodless
wreck:

Come, come, come!

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strewed beneath a nation dead; 505

Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning:

It will burst in bloodier fashion,

When ye stir it, soon returning.
Leave the self-contempt implanted 510

In young spirits, sense-enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel.

Leave Hell's secrets half uncharted

To the maniac dreamer: cruel
More than ye can be with hate 515

Is he with fear.

Come, come, come!

We are steaming up from Hell's wide
gate,

And we burthen the blasts of the atmos-
phere,

But vainly we toil till ye come here. 520

Ione. Sister, I hear the thunder of new
wings.

Panthea. These solid mountains quiver
with the sound

Even as the tremulous air: their shadows
make

The space within my plumes more black
than night.

First Fury

Your call was as a winged car 525
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;

It rapt us from red gulf of war.

Second Fury

From wide cities, famine-wasted;

Third Fury

Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

Fourth Fury

Kingly conclaves stern and cold, 530
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

Fifth Fury

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A Fury

Speak not, whisper not:

I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell 535

Which must bend the Invincible,

The stern of thought;

He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

Fury

Tear the veil!

Another Fury

It is torn.

Chorus

The pale stars of the morn

Shine on a misery, dire to be borne. 540
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh
thee to scorn.

Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou
waken'dst for man?

Then was kindled within him a thirst
which outran

Those perishing waters,—a thirst of
fierce fever,

Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume
him for ever. 545

One came forth of gentle worth,

Smiling on the sanguine earth:

His words outlived him, like swift
poison

Withering up truth, peace, and pity.

Look! where round the wide horizon 550

Many a million-peopled city

Vomits smoke in the bright air.

Mark that outcry of despair!

'Tis his mild and gentle ghost

Wailing for the faith he kindled. 555

Look again, the flames almost

To a glow-worm's lamp have dwin-
dled:

Panthea

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hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

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He has; and in return he chains me here
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Sun

Split my parched skin, or in the moony
night

The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my
hair: 385

Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.

Fury. Blood thou canst see, and fire;
and canst hear groans:

Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain
behind.

Prometheus. Worse?

Fury. In each human heart
terror survives

The ruin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were
true: 620

Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now out-
worn.

They dare not devise good for man's
estate,

And yet they know not that they do not
dare.

The good want power, but to weep barren
tears. 625

The powerful goodness want: worse need
for them.

The wise want love; and those who love
want wisdom;

And all best things are thus confused to
ill.

Many are strong and rich, and would be
just,

But live among their suffering fellow-
men 630

As if none felt: they know not what they
do.

Prometheus. Thy words are like a
cloud of wingèd snakes;

And yet I pity those they torture not.

Fury. Thou pitiest them? I speak no
more! [*Vanishes.*]

Prometheus. Ah woe!

Ah woe! alas! pain, pain ever, for ever! 635
I close my tearless eyes, but see more
clear

Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,
Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the
grave:

The grave hides all things beautiful and
good.

I am a God and cannot find it there, 640
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread
revenge,

This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.

The sights with which thou torturest gird
my soul

With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no types of things
which are. 645

Panthea. Alas! what sawest thou?

Prometheus. There are two woes:
To speak, and to behold; thou spare me
one.

Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-
words, they

Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry:
The nations thronged around, and cried
aloud, 650

As with one voice, Truth, Liberty, and
Love!

Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and
fear:

Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the
spoil.

This was the shadow of the truth I
saw. 655

The Earth. I felt thy torture, son,
with such mixed joy

As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy
state

I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits
Whose homes are the dim caves of human
thought,

And who inhabit, as birds wing the
wind, 660

Its world-surrounding ether; they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future: may they speak comfort to
thee!

Panthea. Look, sister, where a troop
of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful
weather, 665

Thronging in the blue air!

Ione. And see! more come,
Like fountain-vapors when the winds are
dumb,

That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And, hark! is it the music of the pines?

Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall? 670

Panthea. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter
far than all.

Chorus of Spirits

From unremembered ages we
 Gentle guides and guardians be
 Of heaven-oppressed mortality.
 And we breathe, and sicken not, 675
 The atmosphere of human thought:
 Be it dim, and dank, and gray,
 Like a storm-extinguished day,
 Travelled o'er by dying gleams;

Be it bright as all between 680
 Cloudless skies and windless streams,
 Silent, liquid, and serene.

As the birds within the wind,
 As the fish within the wave,
 As the thoughts of man's own mind 685

Float through all above the grave, —
 We make there our liquid lair,
 Voyaging cloudlike and unpent 690
 Through the boundless element:
 Thence we bear the prophecy
 Which begins and ends in thee!

Ione. More yet come, one by one: the
 air around them
 Looks radiant as the air around a star.

First Spirit

On a battle-trumpet's blast
 I fled hither, fast, fast, fast, 695
 'Mid the darkness upward cast.
 From the dust of creeds outworn,
 From the tyrant's banner torn,
 Gathering round me, onward borne,
 There was mingled many a cry — 700
 Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
 Till they faded through the sky.
 And one sound, above, around,
 One sound beneath, around, above,
 Was moving: 'twas the soul of love; 705
 'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
 Which begins and ends in thee.

Second Spirit

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea
 Which rocked beneath, immovably:
 And the triumphant storm did flee, 710
 Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
 Between, with many a captive cloud, —
 A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,

Each by lightning riven in half;
 I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh. 715
 Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
 And spread beneath a hell of death
 O'er the white waters. I alit
 On a great ship lightning-split,
 And speeded hither on the sigh 720
 Of one who gave an enemy
 His plank, then plunged aside to die.

Third Spirit

I sate beside a sage's bed,
 And the lamp was burning red
 Near the book where he had fed, 725
 When a Dream with plumes of flame,
 To his pillow hovering came,
 And I knew it was the same
 Which had kindled long ago
 Pity, eloquence, and woe; 730
 And the world awhile below
 Wore the shade its lustre made.
 It has borne me here as fleet
 As Desire's lightning feet;
 I must ride it back ere morrow, 735
 Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

Fourth Spirit

On a poet's lips I slept
 Dreaming like a love-adept
 In the sound his breathing kept;
 Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses, 740
 But feeds on the ærial kisses
 Of shapes that haunt thought's wilder-
 nesses.
 He will watch from dawn to gloom
 The lake-reflected sun illumine
 The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom, 745
 Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
 But from these create he can
 Forms more real than living man,
 Nurslings of immortality!
 One of these awakened me, 750
 And I sped to succor thee.

Ione. Behold'st thou not two shapes
 from the east and west
 Come, — as two doves to one beloved nest,
 Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air,
 On swift still wings glide down the at-
 mosphere? 755

And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 'tis
despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in
sound.

Panthea. Canst thou speak, sister? all
my words are drowned.

Ione. Their beauty gives me voice. See
how they float
On their sustaining wings of skyeey
grain, 760
Orange and azure deepening into gold!
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's
fire.

Chorus of Spirits

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

Fifth Spirit

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings
the wide air's wildernesses,
That planet-crested Shape swept by on
lightning-braided pinions, 765
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his
ambrosial tresses.
His footsteps paved the world with light;
but as I passed 'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great
sages bound in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who
perished, unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er
till thou, O King of sadness, 770
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to
recollected gladness.

Sixth Spirit

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on
the air,
But treads with killing footstep, and fans
with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts
the best and gentlest bear; 775
Who, soothed to false repose by the fan-
ning plumes above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft
and busy feet,

Dream visions of ærial joy, and call the
monster, Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as
he whom now we greet.

Chorus

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be, 780
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and wingèd steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair, 785
Like a tempest through the air;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

Prometheus. Spirits! how know ye this
shall be?

Chorus

In the atmosphere we breathe, 790
As buds grow red, when the snow-storms
flee,
From spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder-brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow: 795
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us, as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee. 800

Ione. Where are the Spirits fled?

Panthea. Only a sense
Remains of them, like the omnipotence
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
Which through the deep and labyrinthine
soul, 805
Like echoes through long caverns, wind
and roll.

Prometheus. How fair these airy shapes! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art
far,
Asia! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright
wine 810
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.

All things are still: alas! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
Though I should dream I could even sleep
with grief

If slumber were denied not. I would
fain 815

Be what it is my destiny to be,
The savior and the strength of suffering
man,

Or sink into the original gulf of things.
There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no
more. 820

Panthea. Hast thou forgotten one who
watches thee

The cold dark night, and never sleeps but
when

The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

Prometheus. I said all hope was vain
but love: thou lovest.

Panthea. Deeply in truth; but the east-
ern star looks white, 825

And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;
But now invested with fair flowers and
herbs,

And haunted by sweet airs and sounds,
which flow 830

Among the woods and waters, from the
ether

Of her transforming presence, which
would fade

If it were mingled not with thine. Fare-
well!

From ACT THIRD, SCENE 4

The Day of Liberty

Spirit of the Hour. . . . And behold
thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do:
None fawned, none trampled, — hate, dis-
dain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human
brows,

No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of
hell, 135

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."
None frowned, none trembled, none with
eager fear

Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of the tyrant's will

Became, worse fate, the abject of his
own, 140

Which spurred him, like an outspent
horse, to death.

None wrought his lips in truth-entangling
lines

Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained
to speak.

None, with firm sneer, trod out in his
own heart

The sparks of love and hope till there
remained 145

Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among
men,

Infecting all with his own hideous ill.

None talked that common, false, cold,
hollow talk

Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it
breathes, 150

Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.

And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light
and dew

On the wide earth, passed: gentle, radiant
forms, 155

From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not
think,

Looking emotions once they feared to
feel,

And changed to all which once they dared
not be,

Yet being now, made earth like heaven;
nor pride, 160

Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured
gall,

Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe,
love.

Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and
prisons, wherein.

And beside which, by wretched men were
borne 165

Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and
tomes

Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignor-
ance,

Were like those monstrous and barbaric
shapes,

The ghosts of a no-more-remembered
fame,

Which, from their unworn obelisks, look
forth 170

In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors—

mouldering round,
Those imaged, to the pride of kings and
priests,

A dark yet mighty faith, a power as
wide

As is the world it wasted, and are now 175
But an astonishment— even so the tools

And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,

Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded
now.

And those foul shapes, abhorred by god
and man, 180

Which, under many a name and many a
form,

Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execra-
ble,

Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world,—
And which the nations, panic-stricken,

served

With blood, and hearts broken by long
hope, and love 185

Dragged to his altars soiled and garland-
less,

And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which

fear was hate,—
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their aban-
doned shrines.

The painted veil, by those who were, called
life, 190

Which mimicked, as with colors idly
spread,

All men believed and hoped, is torn aside:

The loathsome mask has fallen, the man
remains

Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed,— but
man

Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nation-
less, 195

Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the
king

Over himself, just, gentle, wise,— but
man

Passionless—no, yet free from guilt or
pain,

Which were, for his will made or suffered
them;

Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like
slaves, 200

From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might over-
soar

The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnaced dim in the intense inane.

From ACT FOURTH

The Day of Love

The Moon

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing and shine;
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth 360
My cold bare bosom: oh, it must be thine
On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know;
Green stalks burst forth, and bright
flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom
move; 365

Music is in the sea and air,
Winged clouds soar here and there
Dark with the rain new buds are dream-
ing of:

'Tis love, all love!

The Earth

It interpenetrates my granite mass, 370
Through tangled roots and trodden clay
doth pass,

Into the utmost leaves and delicatest
flowers;
Upon the winds, among the clouds, 'tis
spread;
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscur-
est bowers; 375

And like a storm bursting its cloudy
prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has
arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined
being:
With earthquake shock and swiftmess
making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved
for ever, 380
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-van-
quished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man—who was a many-sided
mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of
error,
This true fair world of things—a sea re-
flecting love,
Which over all his kind,—as the sun's
heaven 385
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and
even,
Darting from starry depths radiance and
life,—doth move:

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is
left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm
cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of
healing springs is poured; 390
Then when it wanders home with rosy
smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears
awhile
It is a spirit, then weeps on her child
restored:

Man, oh not men! a chain of linkèd
thought,
Of love and might to be divided not, 395

Compelling the elements with adaman-
tine stress; [gaze,
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards
heaven's free wilderness:

Man, one harmonious soul of many a
soul, 400
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to
the sea;
Familiar acts are beautiful through
love;
Labor, and pain, and grief, in life's
green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how
gentle they could be! 405

His will, with all mean passions, bad
delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satel-
lites,—
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,—
Is as a tempest-wingèd ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare
not overwhelm, 410
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its
sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through
the cold mass
Of marble and of color his dreams
pass,—
Bright threads whence mothers weave the
robes their children wear;
Language is a perpetual orphic song, 415
Which rules with dædal harmony a
throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else sense-
less and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's ut-
most deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of
sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered,
and roll on! 420

The tempest is his steed, he strides the
air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth
laid bare,
"Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man un-
veils me: I have none."

Demogorgon

This is the day which down the void
abysm,
At the Earth-born's spell, yawns for
Heaven's despotism, 555
And Conquest is dragged captive through
the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient
power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy
hour
Of dead endurance, from the slippery,
steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony,
springs 560
And folds over the world its healing
wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endur-
ance,
These are the seals of that most firm
assurance

Which bars the pit over Destruction's
strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity, 565
Mother of many acts and hours, should
free

The serpent that would clasp her with
his length,—
These are the spells by which to reas-
sume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks in-
finite; 570
To forgive wrongs darker than death or
night;

To defy Power, which seems omnip-
otent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope
creates

From its own wreck the thing it con-
templates;

Neither to change, nor falter, nor re-
pent; 575

This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and
free;

This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and
Victory.

THE CLOUD

(1820)

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting
flowers,

From the seas and the streams;

I bear light shade for the leaves when
laid

In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that
waken 5

The sweet buds every one,

When rocked to rest on their mother's
breast,

As she dances about the sun.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,

And whiten the green plains under; 10

And then again I dissolve it in rain,

And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,

And their great pines groan aghast;

And all the night 'tis my pillow white, 15

While I sleep in the arms of the
blast.

Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,

Lightning my pilot sits—

In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,

It struggles and howls at fits. 20

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,

This pilot is guiding me,

Lured by the love of the genii that move

In the depths of the purple sea;

Over the hills, and the crags, and the
hills, 25

Over the lakes and the plains,

Wherever he dream, under mountain or
stream,

The Spirit he loves remains;

And I all the while bask in heaven's blue
smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor
eyes,

And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead, —
As on the jag of a mountain crag, 35
Which an earthquake rocks and
swings,

An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the
lit sea beneath,

Its ardors of rest and of love, 40
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy
nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire
laden, 45

Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen
feet,

Which only the angels hear, 50
May have broken the woof of my tent's
thin roof,

The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built
tent, 55

Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me
on high,
Are each paved with the moon and
these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning
zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of
pearl. 60

The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel
and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner un-
furl.

From cape to cape, with a bridge-like
shape,

Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof, — 65
The mountains its columns be.

The triumphal arch through which I
march

With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained
to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow; 70
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing
below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;

I pass through the pores of the ocean
and shores; 75

I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a
stain,

The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their
convex gleams,

Build up the blue dome of air, 80
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph, —
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost
from the tomb,

I arise and unbuild it again.

ARETHUSA

(1820)

Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains, —
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag, 5
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks,
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;

Her steps paved with green 10
 The downward ravine
 Which slopes to the western gleams;
 And gliding and springing
 She went, ever singing,
 In murmurs as soft as sleep: 15
 The Earth seemed to love her,
 And Heaven smiled above her,
 As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,
 On his glacier cold, 20
 With his trident the mountains strook,
 And opened a chasm
 In the rocks — with the spasm
 All Erymanthus shook. 25
 And the black south wind
 It unsealed behind
 The urns of the silent snow,
 And earthquake and thunder
 Did rend in sunder
 The bars of the springs below. 30
 The beard and the hair
 Of the River-god were
 Seen through the torrent's sweep,
 As he followed the light
 Of the fleet nymph's flight 35
 To the brink of the Dorian deep.

"Oh save me! Oh guide me!
 And bid the deep hide me,
 For he grasps me now by the hair!"
 The loud Ocean heard, 40
 To its blue depth stirred,
 And divided at her prayer;
 And under the water
 The Earth's white daughter
 Fled like a sunny beam; 45
 Behind her descended
 Her billows, unblended
 With the brackish Dorian stream.
 Like a gloomy stain
 On the emerald main 50
 Alpheus rushed behind, —
 As an eagle pursuing
 A dove to its ruin
 Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers 55
 Where the Ocean Powers
 Sit on their pearlèd thrones;
 Through the coral woods
 Of the weltering floods,
 Over heaps of unvalued stones; 60
 Through the dim beams
 Which amid the streams
 Weave a network of colored light;
 And under the caves,
 Where the shadowy waves 65
 Are as green as the forest's night, —
 Outspeeding the shark,
 And the sword-fish dark,
 Under the ocean foam —
 And up through the rifts 70
 Of the mountain cliffs:
 They passed to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains
 In Enna's mountains,
 Down one vale where the morning basks, 75
 Like friends once parted
 Grown single-hearted,
 They ply their watery tasks.
 At sunrise they leap
 From their cradles steep 80
 In the cave of the shelving hill;
 At noontide they flow
 Through the woods below
 And the meadows of asphodel;
 And at night they sleep 85
 In the rocking deep
 Beneath the Ortygian shore, —
 Like spirits that lie
 In the azure sky
 When they love but live no more. 90

TO A SKYLARK

(1820)

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
 Bird thou never wert, —
 That from Heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated
 art. 5

Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest
 Like a cloud of fire;
 The blue deep thou wingest,
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring
 ever singest. 10

In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,
 O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
 Thou dost float and run,—
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just
 begun. 15

The pale purple even
 Melts around thy flight;
 Like a star of heaven
 In the broad daylight
 Thou art unseen—but yet I hear thy
 shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
 Of that silver sphere
 Whose intense lamp narrows
 In the white dawn clear
 Until we hardly see—we feel that it is
 there. 25

All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As when Night is bare
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and
 Heaven is overflowed. 30

What thou art we know not:
 What is most like thee?
 From rainbow clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see
 As from thy presence showers a rain of
 melody. 35

Like a poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it
 heeded not: 40

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love,—which over-
 flows her bower: 45

Like a glowworm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its ærial hue
 Among the flowers and grass which screen
 it from the view: 50

Like a rose, embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet those
 heavy winged thieves. 55

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
 Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music
 doth surpass. 60

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine;
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so
 divine. 65

Chorus Hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chant,
 Matched with thine, would be all
 But an empty vaunt,—
 A thing wherein we feel there is some
 hidden want. 70

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?
 What fields or waves or mountains?
 What shapes of sky or plain?
 What love of thine own kind? what igno-
 rance of pain? 75

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be;
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee;
 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad
 satiety. 80

Waking or asleep
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream—
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a
 crystal stream? 85

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not;
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of
 saddest thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate and pride and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear:
 I know not how thy joy we ever should
 come near. 95

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the
 ground! 100

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow
 The world should listen then—as I am
 listening now. 105

THE QUESTION

(1820)

I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way,
 Bare winter suddenly was changed to
 spring,
 And gentle odors led my steps astray,
 Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring

Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay 5
 Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
 Its green arms around the bosom of the
 stream,
 But kissed it and then fled,—as thou
 mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and vio-
 lets;
 Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the
 earth, 10
 The constellated flower that never sets;
 Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose
 birth
 The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower
 that wets
 (Like a child, half in tenderness and
 mirth)
 Its mother's face with heaven-collected
 tears, 15
 When the low wind, its playmate's voice,
 it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglan-
 tine,
 Green cowbind and the moonlight-colored
 May,
 And cherry blossoms, and white cups,
 whose wine
 Was the bright dew yet drained not by
 the day, 20
 And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
 With its dark buds and leaves, wandering
 astray,—
 And flowers azure, black, and streaked
 with gold,
 Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge 25
 There grew broad flag-flowers, purple
 pranked with white;
 And starry river buds among the sedge;
 And floating water-lilies, broad and
 bright,
 Which lit the oak that overhung the
 hedge
 With moonlight beams of their own watery
 light; 30

And bulrushes and reeds, of such deep
green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober
sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural
bowers 35
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the
Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and
gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had
come,
That I might there present it!—Oh, to
whom? 40

TO ———

(1820)

I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden,
Thou needest not fear mine;
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burthen thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion, 5
Thou needest not fear mine;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

THE TWO SPIRITS

AN ALLEGORY

(1820)

First Spirit

O Thou, who plumed with strong desire
Wouldst float above the earth, beware!
A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire —
Night is coming!

Bright are the regions of the air, 5
And among the winds and beams
It were delight to wander there —
Night is coming!

Second Spirit

The deathless stars are bright above;
If I would cross the shade of night, 10
Within my heart is the lamp of love,
And that is day!

And the moon will smile with gentle
light
On my golden plumes where'er they
move;
The meteors will linger round my flight, 15
And make night day.

First Spirit

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain?
See, the bounds of the air are shaken —
Night is coming! 20

The red swift clouds of the hurricane
Yon declining sun have overtaken;
The clash of the hail sweeps over the
plain —
Night is coming!

Second Spirit

I see the light, and I hear the sound; 25
I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark,
With the calm within and the light
around
Which makes night day;

And thou, when the gloom is deep and
stark,
Look from thy dull earth, slumber-
bound; 30
My moon-like flight thou then mayst mark
On high, far away.

SONG

(1820)

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day 5
'Tis, since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
 Win thee back again?
 With the joyous and the free
 Thou wilt scoff at pain. 10
 Spirit false! thou hast forgot
 All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
 Of a trembling leaf,
 Thou with sorrow art dismayed; 15
 Even the sighs of grief
 Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
 And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
 To a merry measure: 20
 Thou wilt never come for pity,
 Thou wilt come for pleasure;
 Pity then will cut away
 Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest, 25
 Spirit of Delight!
 The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
 And the starry night;
 Autumn evening, and the morn
 When the golden mists are born. 30

I love snow, and all the forms
 Of the radiant frost;
 I love waves, and winds, and storms, —
 Every thing almost
 Which is Nature's, and may be 35
 Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
 And such society
 As is quiet, wise, and good;
 Between thee and me 40
 What difference? but thou dost possess
 The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love — though she has wings,
 And like light can flee;
 But above all other things, 45
 Spirit, I love thee —
 Thou art love and life! Oh come,
 Make once more my heart thy home.

From ODE TO NAPLES

(1820)

I stood within the city disinterred;
 And heard the autumnal leaves like light
 footfalls
 Of spirits passing through the streets; and
 heard
 The Mountain's slumberous voice at in-
 tervals
 Thrill through those roofless halls, — 5
 The oracular thunder penetrating shook.
 The listening soul in my suspended
 blood:
 I felt that Earth out of her deep heart
 spoke —
 I felt, but heard not. Through white
 columns glowed
 The isle-sustaining Ocean-flood, 10
 A plane of light between two Heavens of
 azure.
 Around me gleamed many a bright sepul-
 chre
 Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his
 pleasure
 Were to spare Death, had never made
 erasure;
 But every living lineament was
 clear 15
 As in the sculptor's thought; and
 there
 The wreaths of stony myrtle, ivy, and pine
 Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded
 snow,
 Seemed only not to move and grow
 Because the crystal silence of the
 air 20
 Weighed on their life; even as the
 Power divine,
 Which then lulled all things, brooded
 upon mine.

TO THE MOON

(A Fragment, 1820)

Art thou pale for weariness
 Of climbing heaven and gazing on the
 earth,
 Wandering companionless

Among the stars that have a different
birth,—

And ever changing, like a joyless eye 5
That finds no object worth its constancy?

Thou chosen sister of the spirit,
That gazes on thee till it pities. . . .

THE WORLD'S WANDERERS

(1820)

Tell me, thou star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night

Will thy pinions close now?

Tell me, moon, thou pale and gray 5
Pilgrim of heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now?

Weary wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest, 10
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow?

TIME LONG PAST

(1820)

Like the ghost of a dear friend dead
Is time long past:
A tone which is now forever fled,
A hope which is now forever past,
A love so sweet it could not last, 5
Was time long past.

There were sweet dreams in the night
Of time long past:
And, was it sadness or delight,
Each day a shadow onward cast 10
Which made us wish it yet might last—
That time long past.

There is regret, almost remorse,
For time long past:
'Tis like a child's beloved corse 15
A father watches, till at last
Beauty is like remembrance, cast
From time long past.

TIME

(1821)

Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are
years,

Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep
woe

Are brackish with the salt of human
tears!

Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb
and flow

Claspest the limits of mortality,— 5
And sick of prey, yet howling on for
more,

Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable
shore;

Treacherous in calm, and terrible in
storm,

Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable Sea? 10

TO NIGHT

(1821)

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night!

Out of thy misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear, 5
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day, 10
Kiss her until she be wearied out;
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn, 15
I sighed for thee;

When light rode high, and the dew was
gone,—

And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,—
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,— 20
I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me?
 Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
 Murmured like a noontide bee, 25
 Shall I nestle near thy side?
 Wouldst thou me? — And I replied,
 No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon; 30
 Sleep will come when thou art fled:
 Of neither would I ask the boon
 I ask of thee, beloved Night —
 Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon! 35

POLITICAL GREATNESS

(1821)

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
 Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in
 arms or arts,
 Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes
 tame:
 Verse echoes not one beating of their
 hearts,
 History is but the shadow of their
 shame, 5
 Art veils her glass, or from the pageant
 starts
 As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
 Staining that heaven with obscene imagery
 Of their own likeness. What are numbers
 knit
 By force or custom? Man who man
 would be, 10
 Must rule the empire of himself; in it
 Must be supreme, establishing his throne
 On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
 Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

MUTABILITY

(1821)

The flower that smiles today
 Tomorrow dies;
 All that we wish to stay
 Tempts, and then flies.

What is this world's delight? 5
 Lightning that mocks the night,
 Brief even as bright.

Virtue, how frail it is!
 Friendship how rare!
 Love, how it sells poor bliss 10
 For proud despair!
 But we, though soon they fall,
 Survive their joy, and all
 Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright, 15
 Whilst flowers are gay,
 Whilst eyes that change ere night
 Make glad the day,
 Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
 Dream thou — and from thy sleep 20
 Then wake to weep.

TOMORROW

(1821)

Where art thou, beloved Tomorrow?
 When young and old, and strong and
 weak,
 Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,
 Thy sweet smiles we ever seek, —
 In thy place — ah! well-a-day! 5
 We find the thing we fled — Today.

A LAMENT

(1821)

O world! O life! O time!
 On whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood
 before:
 When will return the glory of your
 prime?
 No more — oh, never more! 5

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight:
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter
 hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with
 delight
 No more — oh, never more! 10

TO ———

(1821)

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken;

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, 5
Are heaped for the beloved's bed:
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

TO ———

(1821)

One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it;
One hope is too like despair 5
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not 10
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,—
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar 15
From the sphere of our sorrow?

EPIPSYCHIDION

(1821)

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND
UNFORTUNATE LADY, EMILIA V——,
NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT
OF ———

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e
si crea nel infinito un Mondo tutto per essa,
diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro.
HER OWN WORDS.

Sweet Spirit! sister of that orphan one,
Whose empire is the name thou weepest
on,
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy nar-
row cage, 5

Pourest such music that it might assuage
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned
thee,

Were they not deaf to all sweet melody, —
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored nightin-
gale! 10

But soft and fragrant is the faded blos-
som,

And it has no thorn left to wound thy
bosom.

High, spirit-wingèd Heart! who dost
forever

Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain en-
deavor,

Till those bright plumes of thought, in
which arrayed 15

It over-soared this low and worldly
shade,

Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded
breast

Stains with dear blood its unmaternal
nest!

I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter
be,

Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit
thee. 20

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be
human,

Veiling beneath that radiant form of
Woman

All that is insupportable in thee

Of light, and love, and immortality!

Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse! 25

Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!

Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou
living Form

Among the Dead! Thou Star above the
Storm!

Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and
thou Terror!

Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou
Mirror 30

In whom, as in the splendor of the Sun,

All shapes look glorious which thou gazest
on!

Ay, even the dim words which obscure
thee now

Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed
glow;

I pray thee that thou blot from this sad
song 35

All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops, which start like
sacred dew

From the twin lights thy sweet soul
darkens through,—

Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:
Then smile on it, so that it may not
die. 40

I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
I love thee; though the world by no thin
name

Will hide that love, from its unvalued
shame.

Would we two had been twins of the same
mother! 45

Or that the name my heart lent to an-
other

Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
Blending two beams of one eternity!

Yet were one lawful and the other true,
These names, though dear, could paint
not, as is due, 50

How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
I am not thine—I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has
burnt its wings;

Or, like a dying swan who soars and
sings,

Young Love should teach Time, in his
own gray style, 55

All that thou art. Art thou not void of
guile,

A lovely soul formed to be blest and
blest?

A well of sealed and secret happiness,
Whose waters like blithe light and music
are,

Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? a
star 60

Which moves not in the moving heavens,
alone?

A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle
tone

Amid rude voices? a belovèd light?

A solitude, a refuge, a delight?

A lute which those whom Love has taught
to play 65

Make music on, to soothe the roughest
day

And lull fond grief asleep? a buried
treasure?

A cradle of young thoughts of wingless
pleasure?

A violet-shrouded grave of woe?—I
measure

The world of fancies, seeking one like
thee, 70

And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough
way,

And lured me towards sweet death; as
Night by Day,

Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift
Hope,

Led into light, life, peace. An antelope, 75
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
Were less ethereally light. The bright-
ness

Of her divinest presence trembles through
Her limbs,—as underneath a cloud of dew
Embodied in the windless heaven of
June, 80

Amid the splendor-wingèd stars, the Moon
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful.

And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
Killing the sense with passion,—sweet as
stops 85

Of planetary music heard in trance.

In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sunbeams of those wells which ever
leap

Under the lightnings of the soul—too
deep

For the brief fathom-line of thought or
sense. 90

The glory of her being, issuing thence,

And all the rest, though fair and wise,
commend

To cold oblivion; though it is in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary foot-
steps tread, 155

Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, — and
so

With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous
foe

The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and
clay, 160

That to divide is not to take away.

Love is like understanding that grows
bright

Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy
light,

Imagination! which from earth and sky,
And from the depths of human phan-
tasy, 165

As from a thousand prisms and mirrors,
fills

The Universe with glorious beams, and
kills

Error, the worm, with many a sun-like
arrow

Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
The heart that loves, the brain that con-
templates, 170

The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds
thereby

A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in
this;

Evil from good; misery from happiness; 175
The baser from the nobler; the impure
And frail, from what is clear and must
endure:

If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away;

If you divide pleasure and love and
thought, 180

Each part exceeds the whole; and we
know not

How much, while any yet remains un-
shared,

Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow
spared.

This truth is that deep well whence sages
draw

The unenvied light of hope; the eternal
law 185

By which those live, to whom this world
of life

Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife

Tills for the promise of a later birth

The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit
oft 190

Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
In the clear golden prime of my youth's
dawn,

Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the
caves

Of divine sleep, and on the air-like
waves 195

Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous
floor

Paved her light steps. On an imagined
shore,

Under the gray beak of some promontory,
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory
That I beheld her not. In solitudes 200

Her voice came to me through the whis-
pering woods;

And from the fountains; and the odors
deep

Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in
their sleep

Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them
there, 204

Breathed but of *her* to the enamored air;
And from the breezes whether low or
loud,

And from the rain of every passing cloud;
And from the singing of the summer
birds, —

And from all sounds, all silence. In the
words

Of antique verse and high romance, — in
form, 210

Sound, color — in whatever checks that
 storm
 Which with the shattered present chokes
 the past;
 And in that best philosophy, whose taste
 Makes this cold common hell, our life, a
 doom
 As glorious as a fiery martyrdom: 215
 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy
 youth
 I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of
 fire;
 And towards the lodestar of my one de-
 sire,
 I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight 220
 Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
 When it would seek in Hesper's setting
 sphere
 A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
 As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.
 But She, whom prayers or tears then could
 not tame, 225
 Passed, — like a God throned on a winged
 planet,
 Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness
 fan it, —
 Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;
 And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,
 I would have followed, though the grave
 between 230
 Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are
 unseen —
 When a voice said, "O Thou of hearts the
 weakest,
 The phantom is beside thee whom thou
 seekest."
 Then I, "Where?" — the world's echo
 answered "Where!"
 And in that silence, and in my despair, 235
 I questioned every tongueless wind that
 flew
 Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
 Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my
 soul;
 And murmured names and spells which
 have control
 Over the sightless tyrants of our fate. 240

But neither prayer nor verse could dissi-
 pate
 The night which closed on her; nor un-
 create
 That world within this Chaos, mine and
 me,
 Of which she was the veiled Divinity, —
 The world, I say, of thoughts that wor-
 shipped her. 245
 And therefore I went forth, — with hope
 and fear,
 And every gentle passion sick to death,
 Feeding my course with expectation's
 breath, —
 Into the wintry forest of our life;
 And struggling through its error with vain
 strife, 250
 And stumbling in my weakness and my
 haste,
 And half bewildered by new forms, I
 passed
 Seeking among those untaught foresters
 If I could find one form resembling hers,
 In which she might have masked herself
 from me. 255
 There, — One whose voice was venomed
 melody
 Sate by a well, under blue nightshade
 bowers;
 The breath of her false mouth was like
 faint flowers;
 Her touch was as electric poison. Flame
 Out of her looks into my vitals came; 260
 And from her living cheeks and bosom
 flew
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-
 dew
 Into the core of my green heart, and lay
 Upon its leaves, until, as hair grown gray
 O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown
 prime 265
 With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
 The shadow of that idol of my thought.
 And some were fair — but beauty dies
 away;
 Others were wise — but honeyed words
 betray; 270

And one was true — oh! why not true to me?

Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,

I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,

Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day 274

Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain; When, like a noonday dawn, there shone again

Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed

As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed,

As is the Moon, whose changes ever run Into themselves, to the eternal Sun. — 280

The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,

Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles, —

That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame

Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,

And warms not but illumines. Young and fair 285

As the descended Spirit of that sphere, She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night

From its own darkness, until all was bright

Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind;

And, as a cloud charioted by the wind, 290

She led me to a cave in that wild place, And sate beside me, with her downward face

Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.

And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb, 295

And all my being became bright or dim As the Moon's image in a summer sea,

According as she smiled or frowned on me;

And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed. Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead: 300

For at her silver voice came Death and Life,

Unmindful each of their accustomed strife, Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,

The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,

And through the cavern without wings they flew, 305

And cried, "Away! he is not of our crew." I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,

Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips 309

Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse; And how my soul was as a lampless sea,

And who was then its tempest; and when she,

The planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost

Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast

The moving billows of my being fell 315 Into a death of ice, immovable;

And then, what earthquakes made it gape and split,

The white Moon smiling all the while on it:

These words conceal: — If not, each word would be

The key of stanchless tears. Weep not for me! 320

At length, into the obscure forest came The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.

Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns

Flashed from her motion splendor like the Morn's, 324

And from her presence life was radiated Through the gray earth and branches bare

and dead:

So that her way was paved and roofed above

With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love.

And music from her respiration spread Like light, — all other sounds were penetrated 330

By the small, still, sweet spirit of that
 sound,
 So that the savage winds hung mute
 around;
 And odors warm and fresh fell from her
 hair,
 Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air.
 Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun, 335
 When light is changed to love, this glorious
 one
 Floated into the cavern where I lay,
 And called my spirit: and the dreaming
 clay
 Was lifted by the thing that dreamed
 below,
 As smoke by fire; and in her beauty's
 glow 340
 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long
 night
 Was penetrating me with living light.
 I knew it was the Vision veiled from
 me
 So many years — that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this
 passive Earth, 345
 This world of love, this *me*; and into
 birth
 Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and
 dart
 Magnetic might into its central heart;
 And lift its billows and its mists; and
 guide,
 By everlasting laws, each wind and tide 350
 To its fit cloud and its appointed cave;
 And lull its storms, each in the craggy
 grave
 Which was its cradle, luring to faint
 bowers
 The armies of the rainbow-winged
 showers!
 And as those married lights which from
 the towers 355
 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wan-
 dering globe
 In liquid sleep and splendor, as a robe, —
 And all their many-mingled influence
 blend,
 If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end:

So ye, bright regents, which alternate
 sway 360
 Govern my sphere of being, night and
 day!
 Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed
 might;
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light:
 And, through the shadow of the seasons
 three; 364
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
 Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that
 convulsion, 370
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,
 Thine went astray, and that was rent in
 twain:
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
 Be there love's folding-star at thy return;
 The living Sun will feed thee from its
 urn 375
 Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her
 horn
 In thy last smiles: adoring Even and
 Morn
 Will worship thee with incense of calm
 breath,
 And lights and shadows, — as the star of
 Death
 And Birth is worshipped by those sisters
 wild 380
 Called Hope and Fear — upon the heart
 are piled
 Their offerings — of this sacrifice divine
 A world shall be the altar.
 Lady mine,
 Scorn not these flowers of thought, — the
 fading birth
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant
 puts forth 385
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny
 eyes,
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.
 The day is come, and thou wilt fly with
 me!
 To whatso'er of dull mortality

Is mine, remain a vestal sister still: 390
To the intense, the deep, the imperish-
able, —

Not mine but me, — henceforth be thou
united

Even as a bride, delighting and de-
lighted.

The hour is come — the destined star has
risen

Which shall descend upon a vacant
prison. 395

The walls are high, the gates are strong,
thick set

The sentinels — but true love never yet
Was thus constrained: it overleaps all
fence;

Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free
breath, 400

Which he who grasps can hold not; liker
Death,

Who rides upon a thought, and makes his
way

Through temple, tower, and palace, and
the array

Of arms. More strength has Love than
he or they:

For it can burst his charnel, and make
free 405

The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbor now,
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's
brow;

There is a path on the sea's azure floor 410
No keel has ever ploughed that path be-
fore;

The halcyons brood around the foamless
isles;

The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its
wiles;

The merry mariners are bold and free:
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with
me? 415

Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
Is a far Eden of the purple East;
And we between her wings will sit, while
Night

And Day, and Storm and Calm, pursue
their flight,

Our ministers, along the boundless Sea, 420
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.

It is an Isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise;

And, for the harbors are not safe and
good,

This land would have remained a soli-
tude 425

But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden
air

Draw the last spirit of the age of gold, —
Simple and spirited, innocent and bold.

The blue Ægean girds this chosen home,
With ever-changing sound and light and
foam, 431

Kissing the sifted sands and caverns hoar;
And all the winds wandering along the
shore

Undulate with the undulating tide.

There are thick woods where sylvan forms
abide; 435

And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,
Or serene morning air; and far beyond,
The mossy tracks made by the goats and
deer

(Which the rough shepherd treads but
once a year) 440

Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers,
and halls

Built round with ivy, which the water-
falls

Illuminating, with sound that never fails
Accompany the noonday nightingales.

And all the place is peopled with sweet
airs: 445

The light clear element which the isle
wears

Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen
showers,

And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
And from the moss violets and jonquils
peep, 450

And dart their arrowy odor through the
brain

Till you might faint with that delicious
 pain,
 And every motion, odor, beam, and tone
 With that deep music is in unison
 Which is a soul within the soul — they
 seem 455
 Like echoes of an antenatal dream.

It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth,
 and Sea,
 Cradled, and hung in clear tranquility;
 Bright as that wandering Eden, Lucifer,
 Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young
 air. 460

It is a favored place. Famine or Blight,
 Pestilence, War, and Earthquake never
 light
 Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures,
 they

Sail onward far upon their fatal way.
 The wingèd storms, chanting their thun-
 der-psalm 465

To other lands, leave azure chasms of
 calm

Over this isle, — or weep themselves in
 dew,

From which its fields and woods ever
 renew

Their green and golden immortality.
 And from the sea there rise, and from the
 sky 470

There fall, clear exhalations, soft and
 bright,

Veil after veil, each hiding some delight, —
 Which Sun or Moon or Zephyr draw
 aside,

Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
 Glowing at once with love and loveli-
 ness, 475

Blushes and trembles at its own excess.
 Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
 Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
 An atom of th' Eternal, — whose own
 smile

Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen 480
 O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and for-
 ests green,

Filling their bare and void interstices.

But the chief marvel of the wilderness
 Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
 None of the rustic island-people know. 485
 'Tis not a tower of strength, though with
 its height

It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
 Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere
 crime

Had been invented, in the world's young
 prime,

Reared it, — a wonder of that simple
 time, 490

An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
 Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
 It scarce seems now a wreck of human
 art,

But as it were Titanic: in the heart
 Of Earth having assumed its form, then
 grown 495

Out of the mountains, from the living
 stone

Lifting itself in caverns light and high.
 For all the antique and learned imagery
 Has been erased, and in the place of it
 The ivy and the wild-vine interknit 500

The volumes of their many twining stems.
 Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems
 The lampless halls, — and when they fade,
 the sky

Peeps through their winter-woof of
 tracery

With moonlight patches, or star atoms
 keen, 505

Or fragments of the day's intense serene,
 Working mosaic on their Parian floors.

And, day and night, aloof, from the high
 towers

And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
 To sleep in one another's arms, and
 dream

Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks,
 and all that we 511

Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I
 have vowed

Thee to be lady of the solitude.

And I have fitted up some chambers
 there 515

Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
And level with the living winds, which
flow

Like waves above the living waves below.
I have sent books and music there, and all
Those instruments with which high spirits
call 520

The future from its cradle, and the past
Out of its grave, and make the present
last

In thoughts and joys which sleep, but can-
not die,

Folded within their own eternity.
Our simple life wants little, and true
taste 525

Hires not the pale drudge Luxury to
waste

The scene it would adorn, and therefore
still

Nature with all her children haunts the
hill.

The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls
flit 530

Round the evening tower, and the young
stars glance

Between the quick bats in their twilight
dance;

The spotted deer bask in the fresh moon-
light

Before our gate, and the slow, silent
night

Is measured by the pants of their calm
sleep. 535

Be this our home in life, and when years
heap

Their withered hours, like leaves, on our
decay,

Let us become the overhanging day,
The living soul of this Elysian isle,

Conscious, inseparable, one.

Meanwhile 540

We two will rise, and sit, and walk to-
gether,

Under the roof of blue Ionian weather;
And wander in the meadows, or ascend
The mossy mountains, where the blue
heavens bend

With lightest winds, to touch their para-
mour; 545

Or linger where the pebble-paven shore,
Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea,
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—
Possessing and posset by all that is 549
Within that calm circumference of bliss,
And by each other, till to love and live
Be one;—or, at the noontide hour, arrive
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to
keep

The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
Through which the awakened day can
never peep,— 555

A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,
Where secure sleep may kill thine inno-
cent lights,

Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the
rain

Whose drops quench kisses till they burn
again. 559

And we will talk, until thought's melody
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
In words,—to live again in looks, which
dart

With thrilling tone into the voiceless
heart,

Harmonizing silence without a sound.
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms
bound 565

And our veins beat together; and our
lips,

With other eloquence than words, eclipse
The soul that burns between them; and
the wells

Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
The fountains of our deepest life, shall
be 570

Confused in passion's golden purity,
As mountain-springs under the morning
Sun.

We shall become the same, we shall be one
Spirit within two frames,—oh! wherefore
two?

One passion in twin-hearts, which grows
and grew, 575

Till, like two meteors of expanding flame,

Those spheres instinct with it become the
same,

Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever
still

Burning, yet ever inconsumable, —

In one another's substance finding food, 580

Like flames too pure and light and un-
imbued

To nourish their bright lives with baser
prey,

Which point to Heaven and cannot pass
away:

One hope within two wills, one will
beneath

Two overshadowing minds, one life, one
death, 585

One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
And one annihilation. Woe is me!

The wingèd words on which my soul
would pierce

Into the height of love's rare Universe,
Are chains of lead around its flight of
fire — 590

I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sov-
ereign's feet,

And say: "We are the masters of thy
slave;

What wouldest thou with us and ours and
thine?"

Then call your sisters from Oblivion's
cave, 595

All singing loud: "Love's very pain is
sweet,

But its reward is in the world divine
Which, if not here, it builds beyond the
grave."

So shall ye live when I am there. Then
haste

Over the hearts of men, until ye meet 600
Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,

And bid them love each other and be blest;
And leave the troop which errs, and which

reproves,

And come and be my guest, — for I am
Love's.

ADONAI'S

An Elegy on the Death of John Keats (1821)

I

I weep for Adonais — he is dead!

O weep for Adonais! though our tears

Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a
head!

And thou, sad Hour, selected from all
years

To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure
compeers 5

And teach them thine own sorrow! Say:
"With me

Died Adonais; till the Future dares

Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when
he lay, 10

When thy son lay, pierced by the shaft
which flies

In darkness? where was lorn Urania

When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,

'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise

She sate, while one, with soft enamoured
breath, 15

Rekindled all the fading melodies

With which, like flowers that mock the
corse beneath,

He had adorned and hid the coming bulk
of death.

III

O weep for Adonais — he is dead!

Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and
weep! — 20

Yet wherefore? Quench within their
burning bed

Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart
keep,

Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone where all things wise and

fair

Descend. Oh, dream not that the amorous
 Deep 25
 Will yet restore him to the vital air;
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs
 at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
 Lament anew, Urania! — He died,
 Who was the sire of an immortal strain, 30
 Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's
 pride
 The priest, the slave, and the liberticide
 Trampled and mocked with many a
 loathèd rite
 Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
 Into the gulf of death: but his clear
 Sprite 35
 Yet reigns o'er earth, the third among the
 sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew! —
 Not all to that bright station dared to
 climb:
 And happier they their happiness who
 knew,
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night
 of time 40
 In which suns perished, — others more
 sublime,
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or
 God,
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent
 prime;
 And some yet live, treading the thorny
 road,
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to
 Fame's serene abode. 45

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has
 perished,
 The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden
 cherished
 And fed with true-love tears instead of
 dew:

Most musical of mourners, weep anew! 50
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the
 last,
 The bloom, whose petals, nipped before
 they blew,
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
 The broken lily lies — the storm is over-
 past.

VII

To that high Capital where kingly Death 55
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
 He came; and bought, with price of purest
 breath,
 A grave among the eternal, — Come
 away!
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while 60
 still
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay:
 Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh never more!
 Within the twilight chamber spreads
 apace 65
 The shadow of white Death; and at the
 door
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace
 His extreme way to her dim dwelling-
 place, —
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to
 deface 70
 So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
 Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal
 curtain draw.

IX

O weep for Adonais! — The quick
 Dreams,
 The passion-wingèd ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living
 streams 75
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he
 taught.
 The love which was its music, wander
 not, —

Wander no more, from kindling brain to
brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and
mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their
sweet pain 80
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a
home again.

X

And one with trembling hand clasps his
cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings,
and cries:
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not
dead, — 84
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his
brain." —
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no
stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept
its rain. 90

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs, as if embalming
them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and
threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem
Which frozen tears instead of pearls be-
gem. 95
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more
weak;
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen
cheek.

XII

Another Splendor on his mouth alit, — 100
That mouth whence it was wont to draw
the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the
guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath

With lightning and with music: the damp
death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips; 105
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night
clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and
passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came, — Desires and Adora-
tions,
Winged Persuasions and veiled Desti-
nies, 110
Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering
Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phan-
tasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the
gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes, 115
Came in slow pomp; — the moving pomp
might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal
stream.

XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet
sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought 120
Her eastern watch tower, and her hair
unbound, —
Wet with the tears which should adorn
the ground, —
Dimmed the ærial eyes that kindle day:
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay, 125
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in
their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless moun-
tains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered
lay,
And will no more reply to winds or
fountains,

Or amorous birds perched on the young
 green spray, 130
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
 Than those for whose disdain she pined
 away
 Into a shadow of all sounds: — a drear
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the
 woodmen hear. 135

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she
 threw down
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
 Or they dead leaves: since her delight is
 flown,
 For whom should she have waked the
 sullen year?
 To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear, 140
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
 Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,
 With dew all turned to tears, — odor, to
 sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale, 145
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious
 pain;
 Not so the eagle — who like thee could
 scale
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's
 domain
 Her mighty youth with morning — doth
 complain,
 Soaring and screaming round her empty
 nest, 150
 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of
 Cain
 Light on his head who pierced thy innocent
 breast,
 And scared the angel soul that was its
 earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
 But grief returns with the revolving
 year — 155
 The airs and streams renew their joyous
 tone;

The ants, the bees, the swallows, re-
 appear;
 Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead
 Seasons' bier;
 The amorous birds now pair in every
 brake,
 And build their mossy homes in field and
 brere; 160
 And the green lizard and the golden snake,
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their
 trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and
 hill and Ocean,
 A quickening life from the Earth's heart
 has burst,
 As it has ever done, with change and
 motion, 165
 From the great morning of the world
 when first
 God dawned on Chaos: in its stream
 immersed,
 The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer
 light;
 All baser things pant with life's sacred
 thirst,
 Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's
 delight 170
 The beauty and the joy of their renewed
 might.

XX

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit
 tender
 Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath:
 Like incarnations of the stars, when
 splendor
 Is changed to fragrance, they illumine
 death 175
 And mock the merry worm that wakes
 beneath.
 Naught we know, dies. Shall that alone
 which knows
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
 By sightless lightning? the intense atom
 glows
 A moment, then is quenched in a most cold
 repose. 180

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,—
 And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
 Whence are we, and why are we? of what
 scene
 The actors or spectators? Great and
 mean 185
 Meet massed in death, who lends what life
 must borrow.
 As long as skies are blue and fields are
 green,
 Evening must usher night, night urge the
 morrow,
 Month follow month with woe, and year
 wake year to sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh never more!
 "Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless
 Mother, rise 191
 Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's
 core,
 A wound more fierce than his, with tears
 and sighs."
 And all the Dreams that watched Urania's
 eyes,
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's
 song 195
 Had held in holy silence, cried, "Arise!"
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory
 stung,
 From her ambrosial rest the fading
 Splendor sprung:

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night that
 springs
 Out of the East, and follows wild and
 drear 200
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
 Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and
 fear
 So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
 So saddened round her like an atmo-
 sphere 205

Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais
 lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
 Through camps and cities rough with
 stone, and steel,
 And human hearts which, to her aery
 tread 210
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they
 fell;
 And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more
 sharp than they,
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears
 of May, 215
 Paved with eternal flowers that unde-
 serving way.

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
 Shamed by the presence of that living
 Might,
 Blushed to annihilation; and the breath
 Revisited those lips, and life's pale light 220
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her
 dear delight.
 "Leave me not wild and drear and com-
 fortless,
 As silent lightning leaves the starless
 night!
 Leave me not!" cried Urania; her distress
 Roused Death; Death rose and smiled, and
 met her vain caress. 225

XXVI

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
 And in my heartless breast and burning
 brain
 That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts
 else survive,
 With food of saddest memory kept
 alive,
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
 Of thee, my Adonais! I would give

All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot
thence depart! 234

XXVII

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of
men
Too soon, and with weak hands though
mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh where was
then
Wisdom, the mirrored shield, or scorn, the
spear? 240
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent
sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from
thee like deer.

XXVIII

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the
dead; 245
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner
true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion:—how
they fled
When like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped 250
And smiled! The spoilers tempt no second
blow:
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn
them lying low.

XXIX

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles
spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn, 255
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and
when

It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or
shared its light 260
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's
awful night."

XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shep-
herds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles
rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is
bent, 265
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his
song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music
from his tongue. 270

XXXI

Midst others of less note, came one frail
Form,
A phantom among men,—companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell: he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveli-
ness, 275
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilder-
ness;
And his own thoughts, along that ragged
way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father
and their prey.

XXXII

A pard-like spirit beautiful and swift, — 280
A love in desolation masked; a power
Girt round with weakness—it can scarce
uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour:
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;—even whilst we
speak 285
Is it not broken? On the withering
flower

The killing sun smiles brightly: on a
cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the
heart may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies over-
blown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and
blue; 290
And a light spear topped with a cypress
cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses
grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday
dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it. Of
that crew 295
He came the last, neglected and apart, —
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the
hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears: well knew that
gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his
own, 300
As, in the accents of an unknown land,
He sung new sorrow. Sad Urania scanned
The stranger's mien, and murmured:
"Who art thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined
brow, 305
Which was like Cain's or Christ's — Oh,
that it should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the
dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle
thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white
death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone, 310
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?

If it be he who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honored the de-
parted one,
Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacri-
fice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh,
What deaf and viperous murderer could
crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of
woe?
The nameless worm would now itself dis-
own:
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone 320
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and
wrong,
But what was howling in one breast
alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver
lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy
fame! 325
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from
me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered
name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'er-
flow: 330
Remorse and self-contempt shall cling to
thee,
Hot shame shall burn upon thy secret
brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt
— as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream
below: 335
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring
dead, —

Thou canst not soar where he is sitting
now.

Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit
shall flow

Back to the burning fountain whence it
came,

A portion of the Eternal, which must
glow 340

Through time and change, unquenchably
the same, —

Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid
hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead; he doth not
sleep —

He hath awakened from the dream of
life —

'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions,
keep 345

With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spir-
it's knife

Invulnerable nothings. *We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel: fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by
day, 350

And cold hopes swarm like worms within
our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our
night:

Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall de-
light,

Can touch him not and torture not
again; 355

From the contagion of the world's slow
stain

He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray
in vain;

Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to
burn,

With sparkless ashes load an unlamented
urn. 360

XLI

He lives, he wakes — 'tis Death is dead,
not he:

Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young
Dawn,

Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from
thee

The spirit thou lamentest is not gone!

Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to
moan: 365

Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains. And
thou Air,

Which like a mourning veil thy scarf
hadst thrown

O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it
bare

Even to the joyous stars which smile on
its despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is
heard 370

His voice in all her music, from the
moan

Of thunder to the song of night's sweet
bird;

He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and
stone, —

Spreading itself where'er that Power may
move 375

Which has withdrawn his being to its
own;

Which wields the world with never-wea-
ried love,

Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it
above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness

Which once he made more lovely: he doth
bear 380

His part, while the one Spirit's plastic
stress

Sweeps through the dull dense world,
compelling there

All new successions to the forms they
wear, —

Torturing the unwilling dross that checks
its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may
bear; 385
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the
Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not:
Like stars to their appointed height they
climb, 390
And death is a low mist which cannot
blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty
thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live
there, 395
And move like winds of light on dark and
stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond
mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, — his solemn agony had not 400
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion, as they rose, shrank like a thing
reproved. 405

XLVI

And many more whose names on earth
are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot
die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they
cry; 410
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has
long

Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song:
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of
our throng!"

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come
forth, 415
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him
aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous
Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious
might
Sate the void circumference; then
shrink 420
Even to a point within our day and night:
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee
sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured
thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh not of him, but of our joy — 'tis
naught 425
That ages, empires, and religions, there
Lie buried in the ravage they have
wrought;
For such as he can lend, — they borrow
not
Glory from those who made the world
their prey:
And he is gathered to the kings of
thought 430
Who waged contention with their time's
decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass
away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome, — at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered moun-
tains rise, 435
And flowering weeds and fragrant corses
dress

The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the
 dead 440
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass
 is spread.

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which
 dull Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sub-
 lime, 444
 Pavilions the dust of him who planned
 This refuge for his memory; doth stand
 Like flame transformed to marble; and
 beneath,
 A field is spread, on which a newer band
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp
 of death,
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extin-
 guished breath. 450

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young
 as yet
 To have outgrown the sorrow which con-
 signed
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning
 mind,
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou
 find 455
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest
 home,
 Of tears and gall. — From the world's
 bitter wind
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and
 pass; 460
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's
 shadows fly;
 Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,

Until Death tramples it to fragments. —
 Die,
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou
 dost seek! 465
 Follow where all is fled! — Rome's azure
 sky,
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are
 weak
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth
 to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink,
 my Heart?
 Thy hopes are gone before; from all
 things here 470
 They have departed: thou shouldst now
 depart!
 A light is passed from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman; and what still is
 dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee
 wither. —
 The soft sky smiles, the low wind whispers
 near: 475
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
 No more let Life divide what Death can
 join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Uni-
 verse, —
 That Beauty in which all things work and
 move, —
 That Benediction which the eclipsing
 curse 480
 Of birth can quench not, — that sustaining
 Love
 Which, through the web of being blindly
 wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and
 sea,
 Burns bright or dim as each are mirrors
 of
 The fire for which all thirst, — now beams
 on me, 485
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mor-
 tality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked
in song

Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling
through

Whose sails were never to the tempest
given: 490

The massy earth and spherèd skies are
riven!

I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil
of Heaven,

The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal
are. 495

Choruses from HELLAS

(1821)

Life may change, but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish, but can die not; 35
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
Love repulsed,—but it returneth.

Yet were life a charnel where
Hope lay confined with despair;
Yet were truth a sacred lie; 40
Love were lust:

If Liberty

Lent not life its soul of light;
Hope, its iris of delight;
Truth, its prophet's robe to wear;
Love, its power to give and bear. 45

The world's great age begins anew, 1060
The golden years return,

The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:

Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires
gleam

Life wrecks of a dissolving dream. 1065

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;

A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning star;

Where fairer Tempes bloom, there
sleep 1070

Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,

Fraught with a later prize;

Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies; 1075

A new Ulysses leaves once more

Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,

If earth Death's scroll must be!

Nor mix with Laian rage the joy 1080

Which dawns upon the free,

Although a subtler Sphinx renew

Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,

And to remoter time 1085

Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,

The splendor of its prime;

And leave, if naught so bright may live,

All Earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose 1090

Shall burst,—more bright and good

Than all who fell, than One who rose,

Than many unsubdued:

Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,

But votive tears and symbol flowers. 1095

Ah, cease! must hate and death return?

Cease! must men kill and die?

Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn

Of bitter prophecy.

The world is weary of the past: 1100

Oh, might it die or rest at last!

TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION

(1822)

Now the last day of many days,

All beautiful and bright as thou,—

The loveliest and the last,—is dead:

Rise, Memory, and write its praise!

Up! to thy wonted work! come, trace 5

The epitaph of glory fled:

For now the Earth has changed its face,

A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

We wandered to the pine-forest
 That skirts the ocean's foam. 10
 The lightest wind was in its nest,
 The tempest in its home;
 The whispering waves were half asleep,
 The clouds were gone to play,
 And on the bosom of the deep 15
 The smile of Heaven lay.
 It seemed as if the hour were one
 Sent from beyond the skies,
 Which scattered from above the sun
 A light of Paradise. 20

We paused amid the pines that stood
 The giants of the waste,
 Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
 As serpents interlaced,—
 And soothed, by every azure breath 25
 That under heaven is blown,
 To harmonies and hues beneath,
 As tender as its own.
 Now all the tree-tops lay asleep
 Like green waves on the sea, 30
 As still as in the silent deep
 The ocean-woods may be.

How calm it was!—The silence there
 By such a chain was bound
 That even the busy woodpecker 35
 Made stiller with her sound
 The inviolable quietness;
 The breath of peace we drew
 With its soft motion made not less
 The calm that round us grew. 40
 There seemed, from the remotest seat
 Of the white mountain-waste
 To the soft flower beneath our feet,
 A magic circle traced,—
 A spirit interfused around, 45
 A thrilling silent life:
 To momentary peace it bound
 Our mortal nature's strife.
 And still, I felt, the centre of
 The magic circle there 50
 Was one fair form that filled with
 love
 The lifeless atmosphere.

We paused beside the pools that lie
 Under the forest-bough.
 Each seemed as 'twere a little sky 55
 Gulfed in a world below:
 A firmament of purple light
 Which in the dark earth lay,
 More boundless than the depth of night,
 And purer than the day,— 60
 In which the lovely forests grew
 As in the upper air,
 More perfect both in shape and hue
 Than any spreading there:
 There lay the glade and neighboring
 lawn, 65
 And through the dark green wood
 The white sun twinkling like the dawn
 Out of a speckled cloud.
 Sweet views which in our world above
 Can never well be seen, 70
 Were imaged by the water's love
 Of that fair forest green:
 And all was interfused beneath
 With an Elysian glow,—
 An atmosphere without a breath, 75
 A softer day below.
 Like one beloved, the scene had lent
 To the dark water's breast
 Its every leaf and lineament
 With more than truth expressed: 80
 Until an envious wind crept by,—
 Like an unwelcome thought,
 Which from the mind's too faithful eye
 Blots one dear image out.
 Though thou art ever fair and kind, 85
 And forests ever green,
 Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind
 Than calm in water seen.

TO JANE

(1822)

The keen stars were twinkling,
 And the fair moon was rising among
 them,
 Dear Jane.
 The guitar was tinkling,
 But the notes were not sweet till you sang
 them 5
 Again.

As the moon's soft splendor
 O'er the faint cold starlight of heaven
 Is thrown,
 So your voice most tender 10
 To the strings without soul had then
 given
 Its own.

The stars will awaken,
 Though the moon sleep a full hour later
 Tonight; 15
 No leaf will be shaken
 Whilst the dews of your melody scatter
 Delight.

Though the sound overpowers,
 Sing again, with your dear voice reveal-
 ing 20

A tone
 Of some world far from ours,
 Where music and moonlight and feeling
 Are one.

WITH A GUITAR: TO JANE

(1822)

Ariel to Miranda:—Take
 This slave of Music, for the sake
 Of him who is the slave of thee;
 And teach it all the harmony
 In which thou canst, and only thou, 5
 Make the delighted spirit glow,—
 Till joy denies itself again,
 And, too intense, is turned to pain.
 For by permission and command
 Of thine own Prince Ferdinand, 10
 Poor Ariel sends this silent token
 Of more than ever can be spoken.—
 Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
 From life to life, must still pursue
 Your happiness: for thus alone 15
 Can Ariel ever find his own.
 From Prospero's enchanted cell,
 As the mighty verses tell,
 To the throne of Naples, he
 Lit you o'er the trackless sea, 20
 Flitting on, your prow before,
 Like a living meteor.

When you die, the silent Moon,
 In her interlunar swoon,
 Is not sadder in her cell 25
 Than deserted Ariel.
 When you live again on earth,
 Like an unseen star of birth
 Ariel guides you o'er the sea
 Of life from your nativity. 30
 Many changes have been run,
 Since Ferdinand and you begun
 Your course of love, and Ariel still
 Has tracked your steps, and served your
 will:
 Now, in humbler, happier lot, 35
 This is all remembered not;
 And now, alas! the poor sprite is
 Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
 In a body like a grave—
 From you, he only dares to crave, 40
 For his service and his sorrow,
 A smile today, a song tomorrow.

The artist who this idol wrought
 To echo all harmonious thought,
 Felled a tree, while on the steep 45
 The woods were in their winter sleep,
 Rocked in that repose divine
 On the wind-swept Apennine;
 And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
 And some of Spring approaching fast, 50
 And some of April buds and showers,
 And some of songs in July bowers,
 And all of love. And so this tree—
 Oh that such our death may be!—
 Died in sleep, and felt no pain, 55
 To live in happier form again;
 From which, beneath Heaven's fairest
 star,
 The artist wrought this loved guitar,
 And taught it justly to reply,
 To all who question skilfully, 60
 In language gentle as thine own,—
 Whispering in enamored tone
 Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
 And summer winds in sylvan cells.
 For it had learnt all harmonies 65
 Of the plains and of the skies,
 Of the forests and the mountains,
 And the many-voicèd fountains:

The clearest echoes of the hills,
 The softest notes of falling rills, 70
 The melodies of birds and bees,
 The murmuring of summer seas,
 And pattering rain, and breathing dew
 And airs of evening. And it knew
 That seldom-heard mysterious sound, 75
 Which, driven on its diurnal round
 As it floats through boundless day,
 Our world enkindles on its way.

All this it knows, but will not tell
 To those who cannot question well 80
 The spirit that inhabits it;
 It talks according to the wit
 Of its companions; and no more
 Is heard than has been felt before,
 By those who tempt it to betray 85
 These secrets of an elder day.
 But sweetly as its answers will
 Flatter hands of perfect skill,
 It keeps its highest, holiest tone
 For our beloved Jane alone. 90

LINES

(1822)

When the lamp is shattered,
 The light in the dust lies dead;
 When the cloud is scattered,
 The rainbow's glory is shed;
 When the lute is broken, 5
 Sweet tones are remembered not:
 When the lips have spoken,
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendor
 Survive not the lamp and the lute, 10
 The heart's echoes render
 No song when the spirit is mute,—
 No song but sad dirges,
 Like the wind through a ruined cell,
 Or the mournful surges 15
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled,
 Love first leaves the well-built nest:
 The weak one is singled 20
 To endure what it once possessed.

O Love! who bewailest
 The frailty of all things here,
 Why choose you the frailest
 For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee 25
 As the storms rock the ravens on high;
 Bright reason will mock thee,
 Like the sun from a wintry sky.
 From thy nest every rafter
 Will rot, and thine eagle home 30
 Leave thee naked to laughter,
 When leaves fall and cold winds come.

A WIDOW BIRD SATE MOURNING

(*Song from Charles the First, a Fragment, 1822: Scene v*)

A widow bird sate mourning for her love
 Upon a wintry bough;
 The frozen wind crept on above,
 The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare, 5
 No flower upon the ground,
 And little motion in the air
 Except the mill-wheel's sound.

A DIRGE

(1822)

Rough wind, that moanest loud
 Grief too sad for song;
 Wild wind, when sullen cloud
 Knells all the night long;
 Sad storm, whose tears are vain,— 5
 Bare woods, whose branches strain,—
 Deep caves and dreary main:
 Wail, for the world's wrong!

T. L. BEDDOES

(1803-1849)

DREAM-PEDLARY

(1821-26)

If there were dreams to sell,
 What would you buy?
 Some cost a passing bell;
 Some a light sigh,

That shakes from Life's fresh crown 5
Only a rose-leaf down.

If there were dreams to sell,
Merry and sad to tell,
And the crier rang the bell,
What would you buy? 10

A cottage lone and still,
With bowers nigh,
Shadowy, my woes to still,
Until I die.
Such pearl from Life's fresh crown 15
Fain would I shake me down,
Were dreams to have at will,
This would best heal my ill,
This would I buy.

But there were dreams to sell 20
Ill didst thou buy;
Life is a dream, they tell,—
Waking, to die.
Dreaming a dream to prize
Is wishing ghosts to rise; 25
And if I had the spell
To call the buried well,
Which one would I?

If there are ghosts to raise,
What shall I call, 30
Out of hell's murky haze,
Heaven's blue pall?
Raise my loved long-lost boy,
To lead me to his joy.—
There are no ghosts to raise;
Out of death lead no ways; 35
Vain is the call.

Know'st thou not ghosts to sue,
No love thou hast.
Else lie, as I will do,
And breathe thy last. 40
So out of Life's fresh crown
Fall, like a rose-leaf, down.
Thus are the ghosts to woo;
Thus are all dreams made true, 45
Ever to last!

THE SWALLOW LEAVES HER NEST

(*Song from Death's Jest-Book, 1825-26:*
Act I, Scene 4)

The swallow leaves her nest,
The soul my weary breast;
But therefore let the rain
On my grave
Fall pure; for why complain? 5
Since both will come again
O'er the wave.

The wind dead leaves and snow
Doth hurry to and fro;
And, once, a day shall break 10
O'er the wave,
When a storm of ghosts shall shake
The dead, until they wake
In the grave.

LEIGH HUNT

(1784-1859)

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

(1816)

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of
June,—
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy
noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning
brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who 5
class
With those who think the candles come
too soon,
Loving the fire,—and with your trick-
some tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass:
O sweet and tiny cousins, that belong
One to the fields, the other to the
hearth, 10
Both have your sunshine; both, though
small, are strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given
to earth 45

To ring in thoughtful ears this natural
song, —
In doors and out, summer and winter,
Mirth.

ABOU BEN ADHEM

(1834)

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of
peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his
room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold. 5
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem
bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" — The vision raised
its head,
And, with a look made of all sweet ac-
cord,
Answered, "The names of those who love
the Lord." 10
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay,
not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee,
then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-
men."
The angel wrote, and vanished. The
next night 15
It came again, with a great wakening
light,
And showed the names whom love of God
had blessed, —
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the
rest.

THE FISH, THE MAN, AND THE SPIRIT

(1857)

To Fish:

You strange, astonished-looking, angle-
faced,
Dreary-mouthed, gaping wretches of the
sea,

Gulping salt-water everlastingly, —
Cold-blooded, though with red your blood
be graced, —
And mute, though dwellers in the roaring
waste; 5
And you, all shapes beside, that fishy
be, —
Some round, some flat, some long, all
devilry,
Legless, unloving, infamously chaste:
O scaly, slippery, wet, swift, staring
wights,
What is 't ye do? what life lead? eh, dull
goggles? 10
How do ye vary your vile days and
nights?
How pass your Sundays? Are ye still
but joggles
In ceaseless wash? Still naught but gapes,
and bites,
And drinks, and stares, diversified with
boggles?

A Fish answers:

Amazing monster! that, for aught I
know, 15
With the first sight of thee didst make our
race
For ever stare! O flat and shocking
face,
Grimly divided from the breast below!
Thou that on dry land horribly dost go
With a split body and most ridiculous
pace, 20
Prong after prong, disgracer of all
grace,
Long-useless-finned, haired, upright, un-
wet, slow!
O breather of unbreathable sword-sharp
air,
How canst exist? How bear thyself, thou
dry
And dreary sloth? What particle canst
share 25
Of the only blessed life, the watery?
I sometimes see of ye an actual *pair*
Go by, linked fin by fin, most odiously!

*The Fish turns into a Man, and then into
a Spirit, and again speaks:*

Indulge thy smiling scorn, if smiling still,
O man! and loathe, but with a sort of
love: 30

For difference must its use by difference
prove,

And, in sweet clang, the spheres with
music fill.

One of the spirits am I, that at his will
Live in whate'er has life—fish, eagle,
dove—

No hate, no pride, beneath nought, nor
above,— 35

A visitor of the rounds of God's sweet
skill.

Man's life is warm, glad, sad, 'twixt loves
and graves,

Boundless in hope, honored with pangs
austere,

Heaven-gazing; and his angel-wings he
craves:

The fish is swift, small-needing, vague
yet clear, 40

A cold, sweet, silver life, wrapped in round
waves,

Quickened with touches of transporting
fear.

JOHN KEATS

(1795-1821)

HOW MANY BARDS

(1815)

How many bards gild the lapses of time!
A few of them have ever been the food
Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood
Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime.

And often, when I sit me down to
rhyme, 5

These will in throngs before my mind
intrude:

But no confusion, no disturbance rude
Do they occasion; 'tis a pleasing chime.
So the unnumbered sounds that evening
store:

The songs of birds, the whisp'ring of the
leaves, 10

The voice of waters, the great bell that
heaves

With solemn sound,—and thousand others
more,

That distance of recognizance bereaves,—

Make pleasing music, and not wild up-
roar.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAP- MAN'S HOMER

(1815)

Much have I travelled in the realms of
gold,

And many goodly states and kingdoms
seen;

Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

Oft of one wide expanse had I been told 5
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his

demesne;

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene

Till I heard Chapman speak out loud
and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the
skies

When a new planet swims into his ken; 10

Or like stout Cortez when with eagle
eyes

He stared at the Pacific—and all his
men

Looked at each other with a wild sur-
mise—

Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

O SOLITUDE

(1816)

O solitude! if I must with thee dwell,

Let it not be among the jumbled heap

Of murky buildings: climb with me the
steep,—

Nature's observatory—whence the dell,

Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal
swell 5

May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep

'Mongst boughs pavilioned, where the
 deer's swift leap
 Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove
 bell.
 But though I'll gladly trace these scenes
 with thee,
 Yet the sweet converse of an innocent
 mind, 10
 Whose words are images of thoughts re-
 fined,
 Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
 Almost the highest bliss of humankind
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits
 flee.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

(1816)

The poetry of earth is never dead:
 When all the birds are faint with the hot
 sun,
 And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
 From hedge to hedge about the new-mown
 mead;
 That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the
 lead 5
 In summer luxury,—he has never done
 With his delights; for when tired out with
 fun
 He rests at ease beneath some pleasant
 weed.
 The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
 On a lone winter evening, when the
 frost 10
 Has wrought a silence, from the stove
 there shrills
 The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing
 ever,—
 And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
 The Grasshopper's among some grassy
 hills.

ON THE SEA

(1817)

It keeps eternal whisperings around
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the
 spell

Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy
 sound.
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found 5
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell
 Be moved for days from where it some-
 time fell,
 When last the winds of heaven were un-
 bound.
 Oh ye! who have your eye-balls vexed and
 tired,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the
 Sea; 10
 Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar
 rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody—
 Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and
 brood
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

From ENDYMION, BOOK FIRST

(1817)

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
 Its loveliness increases; it will never
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet
 breathing. 5
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we
 wreathing
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman
 dearth
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened
 ways 10
 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of
 all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the
 moon,
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady
 boon
 For simple sheep; and such are daffodils 15
 With the green world they live in; and
 clear rills
 That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest
 brake,

Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose
blooms:

And such too is the grandeur of the
dooms 20

We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or
read:

An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences 25
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the
moon,

The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering
light 30

Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast
That, whether there be shine, or gloom
o'ercast,

They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I
Will trace the story of Endymion. 35

The very music of the name has gone
Into my being, and each pleasant scene
Is growing fresh before me as the green
Of our own valleys: so I will begin
Now while I cannot hear the city's din; 40
Now while the early budders are just new,
And run in mazes of the youngest hue
About old forests; while the willow trails
Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the
year 45

Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly
steer

My little boat, for many quiet hours,
With streams that deepen freshly into
bowers.

Many and many a verse I hope to write
Before the daisies, vermeil rimmed and
white, 50

Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the
bees

Hum about globes of clover and sweet
peas,

I must be near the middle of my story.

O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,

See it half finished; but let Autumn
bold, 55

With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end.

And now at once, adventuresome, I send
My herald thought into a wilderness:
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly
dress 60

My uncertain path with green, that I may
speed

Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Hymn to Pan

I

O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth
hang

From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life,
death

Of unseen flowers in heavy peaceful-
ness; 235

Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels
darken;

And through whole solemn hours dost sit
and hearken

The dreary melody of bedded reeds,
In desolate places, where dank moisture
breeds 240

The pipy hemlock to strange over-
growth, —

Bethinking thee how melancholy loth

Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx — do thou
now,

By thy love's milky brow,
By all the trembling mazes that she
ran, 245

Hear us, great Pan!

II

O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet,
turtles

Passion their voices cooingly 'mong
myrtles,

What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows that outskirt the
side 250

Of thine enmossèd realms: O thou, to whom
 Broad-leaved fig trees even now fore-
 doom
 Their ripened fruitage; yellow-girted bees
 Their golden honeycombs; our village leas
 Their fairest-blossomed beans and popped
 corn; 255
 The chuckling linnet its five young un-
 born,
 To sing for thee; low creeping straw-
 berries
 Their summer coolness; pent up butter-
 flies
 Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh-bud-
 ding year
 All its completions — be quickly near, 260
 By every wind that nods the mountain
 pine,
 O forester divine!

III

Thou, to whom every fawn and satyr
 flies
 For willing service: whether to surprise
 The squatted hare while in half-sleeping
 fit; 265
 Or upward ragged precipices flit
 To save poor lambkins from the eagle's
 maw;
 Or by mysterious enticement draw
 Bewildered shepherds to their path again;
 Or to tread breathless round the frothy
 main 270
 And gather up all fancifullest shells
 For thee to tumble into naiads' cells,
 And, being hidden, laugh at their out-
 peeping;
 Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
 The while they pelt each other on the
 crown 275
 With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones
 brown —
 By all the echoes that about thee ring,
 Hear us, O satyr king!

IV

O hearkener to the loud-clapping shears,
 While ever and anon to his shorn peers 280
 A ram goes bleating: winder of the horn,

When snouted wild-boars routing tender
 corn
 Anger our huntsman: breather round our
 farms,
 To keep off mildews, and all weather
 harms:
 Strange ministrant of undescribèd
 sounds, 285
 That come a-swooning over hollow
 grounds,
 And wither drearily on barren moors:
 Dread opener of the mysterious doors
 Leading to universal knowledge — see,
 Great son of Dryope, 290
 The many that are come to pay their
 vows
 With leaves about their brows!

V

Be still the unimaginable lodge
 For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne of
 heaven, 295
 Then leave the naked brain: be still the
 leaven
 That, spreading in this dull and clodded
 earth,
 Gives it a touch ethereal, — a new birth:
 Be still a symbol of immensity;
 A firmament reflected in a sea; 300
 An element filling the space between;
 An unknown — But no more: we humbly
 screen
 With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly
 bending,
 And, giving out a shout most heaven-rend-
 ing,
 Conjure thee to receive our humble
 pæan, 305
 Upon thy Mount Lycean!

IN A DREAR-NIGHTED
DECEMBER

(1817)

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy tree,
 Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity:

The north cannot undo them,
 With a sleety whistle through them;
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy brook,
 Thy buddlings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look;
 But with a sweet forgetting,
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting
 About the frozen time.

Ah! would 'twere so with many
 A gentle girl and boy!
 But were there ever any
 Writhed not at passèd joy?
 To know the change and feel it,
 When there is none to heal it,
 Nor numbèd sense to steal it,
 Was never said in rhyme.

WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE

(1818)

When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has gleaned my teeming
 brain,
 Before high-pilèd books, in charact'ry,
 Hold like rich garners the full ripened
 grain;
 When I behold, upon the night's starred
 face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of
 chance;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an
 hour!
 That I shall never look upon thee more, 10
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till Love and Fame to nothingness do
 sink.

From EPISTLE TO REYNOLDS

(1818)

On Imagination

O that our dreamings all, of sleep or
 wake,
 Would all their colors from the sunset
 take,—
 From something of material sublime,—
 Rather than shadow our own soul's day-
 time 70
 In the dark void of night. For in the
 world
 We jostle— But my flag is not unfurled
 On the Admiral-staff; and so philosophize
 I dare not yet! Oh, never will the prize,
 High reason, and the love of good and
 ill, 75
 Be my award! Things cannot to the will
 Be settled, but they tease us out of
 thought;
 Or is it that imagination brought
 Beyond its proper bound, yet still confined,
 Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind, 80
 Cannot refer to any standard law
 Of either earth or heaven? It is a flaw
 In happiness, to see beyond our bourn,—
 It forces us in summer skies to mourn,
 It spoils the singing of the Nightingale. 85

Dear Reynolds! I have a mysterious
 tale,
 And cannot speak it. The first page I
 read
 Upon a lampit rock of green sea-weed
 Among the breakers: 'twas a quiet eve,
 The rocks were silent, the wide sea did
 weave. 90
 An untumultuous fringe of silver foam
 Along the flat brown sand. I was at
 home,
 And should have been most happy;— but I
 saw
 Too far into the sea, where every maw
 The greater on the less feeds ever-
 more;— 95
 But I saw too distinct into the core
 Of an eternal fierce destruction:
 And so from happiness I far was gone.

Still am I sick of it; and tho', today,
 I've gathered young spring-leaves, and
 flowers gay 100
 Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,
 Still do I that most fierce destruction see:
 The shark at savage prey, — the hawk at
 pounce, —
 The gentle robin, like a pard or ounce,
 Ravening a worm. — Away, ye horrid
 moods! 105
 Moods of one's mind! You know I hate
 them well.
 You know I'd sooner be a clapping bell
 To some Kamtschatcan Missionary
 Church,
 Than with these horrid moods be left i'
 the lurch.

TO MAIA
 (Fragment of an ode, 1818)

Mother of Hermes! and still youthful
 Maia!
 May I sing to thee
 As thou wast hymnèd on the shores of
 Baiae?
 Or may I woo thee
 In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles 5
 Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian
 isles,
 By bards who died content on pleasant
 sward,
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan?
 O, give me their old vigor, and unheard
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the
 span 10
 Of heaven and few ears,
 Rounded by thee my song should die away
 Content as theirs,
 Rich in the simple worship of a day.

ROBIN HOOD
 (1818)

No! those days are gone away,
 And their hours are old and gray,
 And their minutes buried all
 Under the down-trodden pall

Of the leaves of many years: 5
 Many times have winter's shears,
 Frozen North, and chilling East,
 Sounded tempests to the feast
 Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
 Since men knew nor rent nor leases. 10

No, the bugle sounds no more,
 And the twanging bow no more;
 Silent is the ivory shrill
 Past the heath and up the hill;
 There is no mid-forest laugh, 15
 Where lone Echo gives the half
 To some wight, amazed to hear
 Jestng, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
 You may go, with sun or moon, 20
 Or the seven stars to light you,
 Or the polar ray to right you;
 But you never may behold
 Little John, or Robin bold;
 Never one, of all the clan, 25
 Thrumming on an empty can
 Some old hunting ditty, while
 He doth his green way beguile
 To fair hostess Merriment,
 Down beside the pasture Trent; 30
 For he left the merry-tale
 Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
 Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
 Gone, the tough-belted outlaw 35
 Idling in the "grenè shawe";
 All are gone away and past!
 And if Robin should be cast
 Sudden from his turfèd grave,
 And if Marian should have 40
 Once again her forest days,
 She would weep, and he would craze:
 He would swear, — for all his oaks,
 Fallen beneath the dockyard strokes,
 Have rotted on the briny seas; 45
 She would weep that her wild bees
 Sang not to her — strange! that honey
 Can't be got without hard money!

So it is: yet let us sing,
 Honor to the old bow-string! 50
 Honor to the bugle-horn!
 Honor to the woods unshorn!
 Honor to the Lincoln green!
 Honor to the archer keen!
 Honor to tight Little John, 55
 And the horse he rode upon!
 Honor to bold Robin Hood,
 Sleeping in the underwood!
 Honor to Maid Marian,
 And to all the Sherwood-clan! 60
 Though their days have hurried by,
 Let us two a burden try.

LINES ON
 THE MERMAID TAVERN
 (1818)

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
 Have ye tippled drink more fine 5
 Than mine host's Canary wine?
 Or are fruits of Paradise
 Sweeter than those dainty pies
 Of venison? O generous food! 10
 Drest as though bold Robin Hood
 Would, with his maid Marian,
 Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
 Mine host's sign-board flew away,
 Nobody knew whither, till 15
 An astrologer's old quill
 To a sheepskin gave the story,—
 Said he saw you in your glory,
 Underneath a new old sign
 Sipping beverage divine, 20
 And pledging with contented smack
 The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern, 25
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ODE
 (1818)

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth!
 Have ye souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new?
 Yes, and those of heaven commune 5
 With the spheres of sun and moon;
 With the noise of fountains wondrous,
 And the parle of voices thund'rous;
 With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease 10
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got 15
 Perfume which on earth is not;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, trancèd thing,
 But divine melodious truth,
 Philosophic numbers smooth, 20
 Tales and golden histories
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
 On the earth ye live again;
 And the souls ye left behind you 25
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,
 Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumbered, never cloying.
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak
 To mortals, of their little week: 30
 Of their sorrows and delights;
 Of their passions and their spites;
 Of their glory and their shame;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us, every day, 35
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth!
 Ye have souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new! 40

FANCY

(1818)

Ever let the Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
 Then let wingèd Fancy wander 5
 Through the thought still spread beyond
 her:
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.

O sweet Fancy! let her loose:
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use, 10
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming;
 Autumn's red-lipped fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting. What do then? 15
 Sit thee by the ingle, when
 The sear fagot blazes bright,
 Spirit of a winter's night;
 When the soundless earth is muffled,
 And the caked snow is shuffled, 20
 From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
 When the Night doth meet the Noon
 In a dark conspiracy
 To banish Even from her sky.
 Sit thee there, and send abroad, 25
 With a mind self-overawed,
 Fancy, high-commissioned — send her!
 She has vassals to attend her:
 She will bring, in spite of frost,
 Beauties that the earth hath lost; 30
 She will bring thee, all together,
 All delights of summer weather;
 All the buds and bells of May,
 Frow dewy sward or thorny spray;
 All the heapèd Autumn's wealth, 35
 With a still, mysterious stealth.

She will mix these pleasures up
 Like three fit wines in a cup,
 And thou shalt quaff it — thou shalt hear
 Distant harvest-carols clear; 40
 Rustle of the reapèd corn;
 Sweet birds antheming the morn;
 And, in the same moment — hark!

'Tis the early April lark,
 Or the rooks, with busy caw, 45
 Foraging for sticks and straw.
 Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
 The daisy and the marigold;
 White-plumed lilies, and the first
 Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst; 50
 Shaded hyacinth, alway
 Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
 And every leaf, and every flower,
 Pearlèd with the self-same shower.
 Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep 55
 Meagre from its cellèd sleep;
 And the snake all winter-thin
 Cast on sunny bank its skin.
 Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
 Hatching in the hawthorn-tree, 60
 When the henbird's wing doth rest
 Quiet on her mossy nest;
 Then the hurry and alarm
 When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
 Acorns ripe down-pattering, 65
 While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
 Every thing is spoilt by use:
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gazed at? Where's the maid 70
 Whose lip mature is ever new?
 Where's the eye, however blue,
 Doth not weary? Where's the face
 One would meet in every place?
 Where's the voice, however soft, 75
 One would hear so very oft?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let, then, wingèd Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind: 80
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide;
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's, when her zone 85
 Slipped its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid. — Break the 90
 mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash;

Quickly break her prison-string
And such joys as these she'll bring.—
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

(1819)

I

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the
frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold.
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while
he told 5
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a
death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his
prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy
man; 10
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his
knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot,
wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees.
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to
freeze,
Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails: 15
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods
and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little
door,
And scarce three steps ere Music's golden
tongue 20
Flattered to tears this agèd man and poor;
But no—already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and
sung;

His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve;
Another way he went, and soon among 25
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake
to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude
soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was
wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide;
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand
guests;
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice
rests, 35
With hair blown back, and wings put
crosswise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plumes, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
The brain, new-stuffed, in youth, with
triumphs gay 40
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one lady
there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry
day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly
care,
As she had heard old dames full many
times declare. 45

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of
delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night, 50
If ceremonies due they did aright:
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that
they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
 The music, yearning like a god in pain,
 She scarcely heard; her maiden eyes divine,
 Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by — she heeded not at all. In vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
 And back retired, — not cooled by high disdain,
 But she saw not; her heart was elsewhere:
 She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short.
 The hallowed hour was near at hand. She sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amorn,
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before tomorrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell;
 All eyes be muffled; or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel.
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance! the agèd-creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland.
 He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place:
 They are all here tonight, the whole blood-thirsty race!"

XII

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand,—
 He had a fever late, and in the fit
 He cursed thee and thine, both house and land;
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me! flit!
 Flit like a ghost away." — "Ah, Gossip dear,
 We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
 And tell me how" — "Good Saints! not here, not here:
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII

He followed through a lowly archèd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty
plume; 110

And as she mutter'd "Well-a — well-a-
day!"

He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said
he;

"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom 115
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving
piously."

XIV

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the elves and
fays, 121

To venture so; it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro! — St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help; my lady fair the conjuror
plays

This very night: good angels her de-
ceive! 125

But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time
to grieve."

XV

Feebly she laughed in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an agèd crone
Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-
book, 130

As spectaclèd she sits in chimney-nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she
told

His lady's purpose; and he scarce could
brook

Tears, at the thought of those enchant-
ments cold, 134

And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown
rose,

Flushing his brow, and in his painèd heart
Made purple riot; then doth he propose

A stratagem that makes the beldame
start:

"A cruel man and impious thou art; 140
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and
dream

Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go! — I
deem

Thou canst not surely be the same that
thou didst seem."

XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I
swear," 145

Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find
grace

When my weak voice shall whisper its last
prayer,

If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face.

Good Angela, believe me by these
tears; 150

Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's
ears,

And beard them, though they be more
fanged than wolves and bears."

XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble
soul?

A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard
thing, 155

Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight
toll;

Whose prayers for thee, each morn and
evening,

Were never missed." Thus plaining, doth
she bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160

That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or
woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there
hide

Him in a closet, of such privacy 165
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless
 bride,
 While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-
 eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers met, 170
 Since Merlin paid his demon all the mon-
 strous debt.

XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the
 dame:
 "All cates and dainties shall be stored
 there
 Quickly on this feast-night; by the tam-
 bour frame
 Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to
 spare, 175
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel
 in prayer
 The while: ah! thou must needs the lady
 wed,
 Or may I never leave my grave among the
 dead." 180

XXI

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly passed:
 The Dame returned, and whispered in his
 ear
 To follow her, — with agèd eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last, 185
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and
 chaste;
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleased
 amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in
 her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair, 191
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,
 Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware.

With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turned, and down the agèd gossip
 led 195
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
 She comes, she comes again, like ringdove
 frayed and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine,
 died; 200
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air and visions wide:
 No uttered syllable, or — woe betide!
 But, to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should
 swell 206
 Her throat in vain, and die heart-stifled in
 her dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple arched there
 was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of
 knot-grass, 210
 And diamonded with panes of quaint de-
 vice,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked
 wings;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand her-
 aldries
 And twilight saints and dim emblazon-
 ings, 215
 A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood
 of queens and kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry
 moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair
 breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and
 boon;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together
 prest, 220

And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
 She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven — Porphyro grew
 faint:
 She knelt so pure a thing, so free from
 mortal taint. 225

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she
 frees;
 Unclassps her warmèd jewels one by one;
 Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her
 knees. 230
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and
 sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the
 charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly
 nest, 235
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she
 lay,
 Until the popped warmth of sleep op-
 pressed
 Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued
 away, —
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-
 day;
 Blissfully havened both from joy and
 pain; 240
 Clasped like a missal where swart Pay-
 nims pray;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud
 again.

XXVIII

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress, 245
 And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness:
 Which when he heard, that minute did he
 bless,

And breathed himself; then from the closet
 crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250
 And, over the hushed carpet, silent stopt,
 And 'tween the curtains peeped, where lo!
 — how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bedside, where the faded
 moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguished, threw
 thereon 255
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet —
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying
 tone — 260
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the
 noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
 While he from forth the closet brought a
 heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and
 gourd; 265
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
 From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedared Leba-
 non. 270

XXXI

These delicacies he heaped with glowing
 hand
 On golden dishes, and in baskets bright
 Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume
 light. — 275
 "And now, my love, my seraph fair,
 awake!
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul
 doth ache."

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd
arm 280
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her
dream
By the dusk curtains — 'twas a midnight
charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight
gleam; 284
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoièd in woofèd phan-
tasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
Tumultuous, — and, in chords that ten-
derest be, 290
He played an ancient ditty, long since
mute,
In Provence called "La belle dame sans
mercy":
Close to her ear touching the melody —
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft
moan.
He ceased — she panted quick — and sud-
denly 295
Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-
sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh
expelled 300
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many
a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would
keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous
eye, 305
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so
dreamingly.

XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine
ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and
clear: 310
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill,
and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings
dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my love, I know not
where to go." 315

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep re-
pose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320
Blendeth its odor with the violet, —
Solution sweet. Meantime the frost-wind
blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp
sleet
Against the window-panes: St. Agnes'
moon hath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark; quick pattereth the flaw-blown
sleet: 325
"This is no dream, my bride, my Made-
line!"
'Tis dark; the icèd gusts still rave and
beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and
pine. —
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither
bring? 330
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing, —
A dove forlorn and lost with sick un-
pruned wing."

XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely
bride!

Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest? 335
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and ver-
meil dyed?

Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and-guest,
A famished pilgrim, — saved by miracle.

Though I have found, I will not rob thy
nest 340

Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st
well

To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery
land,

Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed.
Arise, arise! the morning is at hand — 345
The bloated wassailers will never heed —
Let us away, my love, with happy speed:
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to
see, —

Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy
mead:

Awake! arise! my love and fearless be, 350
For o'er the southern moors I have a home
for thee."

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all
around,

At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready
spears. —

Down the wide stairs a darkling way they
found. 355

In all the house was heard no human
sound:

A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by
each door;

The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and
hound,

Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty
floor. 360

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide
hall.

Like phantoms to the iron porch they
glide,

Where lay the porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:

The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook
his hide, 365

But his sagacious eye an inmate owns.

By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide;
The chains lie silent on the footworn
stones:

The key turns, and the door upon its
hinges groans.

XLII

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago 370
These lovers fled away into the storm!

That night the Baron dreamt of many a
woe;

And all his warrior-guests, with shade and
form

Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-
worm,

Were long be-nightmared. Angela the
old 375

Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face
deform;

The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his
ashes cold.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

(1819)

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?

The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, 5
So haggard and so woe-begone?

The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,

With anguish moist and fever-dew; 10
And on thy cheek a fading rose

Fast withereth too.

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful — a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light, 15
And her eyes were wild.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan. 20

"I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long:
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet, 25
And honey wild, and manna-dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
'I love thee true.'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed, and sighed full
sore, 30
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

"And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed — ah! woe be-
tide! —
The latest dream I ever dreamed 35
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all:
They cried, 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!' 40

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide;
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn here, 45
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the
lake,
And no birds sing."

TO SLEEP

(1819)

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from
the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee,
close, 5
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing
eyes, —
Or wait the Amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities.
Then save me, or the passèd day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes — 10
Save me from curious Conscience, that still
hoards
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like
a mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,
And seal the hushèd casket of my soul.

ON FAME

(1819)

How fevered is the man who cannot look
Upon his mortal days with temperate
blood,
Who vexes all the leaves of his life's
book,
And robs his fair name of its maiden-
hood:
It is as if the rose should pluck herself, 5
Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom;
As if a naiad, like a meddling elf,
Should darken her pure grot with muddy
gloom.
But the rose leaves herself upon the
briar,
For winds to kiss and grateful bees to
feed; 10
And the ripe plum still wears its dim
attire;
The undisturbèd lake has crystal space:
Why then should man, teasing the world
for grace,
Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

ODE TO PSYCHE

(1819)

I

O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers,
wrung

By sweet enforcement and remembrance
dear,

And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
Even into thine own soft-conch'd ear:

Surely I dreamt today, or did I see 5
The wing'd Psyche with awakened eyes?

I wandered in a forest thoughtlessly,

And, on the sudden, fainting with sur-
prise,

Saw two fair creatures, couch'd side by
side

In deepest grass, beneath the whip'ring
roof 10

Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where
there ran

A brooklet, scarce espied.

II

'Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers, fra-
grant-eyed,

Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded
grass; 15

Their arms embrac'd, and their pinions
too;

Their lips touched not, but had not
bade adieu,

As if disjoin'd by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aurean love. 20

The wing'd boy I knew;

But who wast thou, O happy, happy
dove?

His Psyche true!

III

O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy! 25

Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-regioned
star,

Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the
sky:

Fairer than these, though temple thou hast
none,

Nor altar heaped with flowers;

Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan 30
Upon the midnight hours;

No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense
sweet

From chain-swung censer teeming;

No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat

Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming. 35

IV

O brightest! though too late for antique
vows,

Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest
boughs,

Holy the air, the water, and the fire!

Yet even in these days so far retired 40

From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,

Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.

So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours; 45

Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense
sweet

From swing'd censer teeming;

Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale mouthed prophet dreaming.

V

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind, 51

Where branch'd thoughts, new grown with
pleasant pain,

Instead of pines shall murmur in the
wind:

Far, far around shall those dark-clustered
trees

Fledge the wild-ridg'd mountains, steep
by steep; 55

And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds,
and bees,

The moss-lain dryads shall be lulled to
sleep.

And in the midst of this wide quietness

A rosy sanctuary will I dress

With the wreathed trellis of a working
brain: 60

With buds, and bells, and stars without
a name,

With all the gardener Fancy e'er could
feign,

Who, breeding flowers, will never breed
the same.

And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win, —

A bright torch, and a casement ope at
night, 65

To let the warm Love in!

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

(1819)

I

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow
time,

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our
rhyme:

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy
shape 5

Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What
maidens loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to
escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild
ecstasy? 10

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those un-
heard

Are sweeter: therefore, ye soft pipes,
play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more en-
deared,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.

Fair youth beneath the trees, thou canst
not leave 15

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be
bare!

Bold lover, never, never canst thou
kiss,

Though winning near the goal — yet, do
not grieve:

She cannot fade, though thou hast not
thy bliss,

Forever wilt thou love, and she be
fair! 20

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs, that cannot
shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring
adieu!

And, happy melodist, unwearied,

Forever piping songs forever new!

More happy love! more happy, happy
love! 25

Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,

Forever panting, and forever young;

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and
cloyed,

A burning forehead, and a parching
tongue. 30

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?

To what green altar, O mysterious
priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the
skies,

And all her silken flanks with garlands
drest?

What little town by river or sea shore, 35

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of this folk, this pious
morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore

Will silent be; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er re-
turn. 40

V

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede

Of marble men and maidens over-
wrought,

With forest branches and the trodden
weed;

Thou, silent form, does tease us out of
thought

As doth eternity: cold pastoral! 45
 When old age shall this generation
 waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other
 woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou
 say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that
 is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to
 know. 50

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

(1819)

I

No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poison-
 ous wine;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proser-
 pine;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries; 5
 Nor let the beetle nor the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the
 downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
 For shade to shade will come too
 drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of
 the soul. 10

II

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven, like a weeping
 cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hills in an April
 shroud:
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose, 15
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-
 wave,
 Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her
 rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless
 eyes. 20

III

She dwells with Beauty,—Beauty that
 must die;
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth
 sips.
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight 25
 Veiled Melancholy has her sovran
 shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose
 strenuous tongue
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate
 fine:
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her
 might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies
 hung. 30

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

(1819)

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness
 pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had
 drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had
 sunk:
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, 5
 But being too happy in thine happi-
 ness,—
 That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the
 trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows number-
 less,
 Singest of summer in full-throated
 ease.

II

O for a draught of vintage that hath been
 Cooled a long age in the deep-delved
 earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-
 burnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South, 15
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippo-
 crene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the
 brim,
 And purple-stained mouth!
 That I might drink, and leave the world
 unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the for-
 est dim: 20

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never
 known, —
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each
 other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray
 hairs, 25
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-
 thin, and dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of
 sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs;
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous
 eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-
 morrow. 30

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his
 pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and
 retards. —
 Already with thee! Tender is the night, 35
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her
 throne,
 Clustered around by all her starry
 fays;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the
 breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and wind-
 ing mossy ways. 40

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the
 boughs,
 But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each
 sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month en-
 dows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree
 wild:
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglan-
 tine;
 Fast fading violets covered up in
 leaves;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on sum-
 mer eves. 50

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful
 Death,
 Called him soft names in many a musèd
 rime,
 To take into the air my quiet breath, —
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 55
 To cease upon the midnight with no
 pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul
 abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears
 in vain —
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal
 bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down:
 The voice I hear this passing night was
 heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a
 path 65
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when,
 sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien
 corn:
 The same that oft-times hath

Charmed magic casements, opening on the
foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands for-
lorn. 70

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole
self!

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf!

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades 75
Past the near meadows, over the still
stream,

Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried
deep

In the next valley-glades:

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music—Do I wake or
sleep? 80

TO AUTUMN

(1819)

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun!
Conspiring with him how to load and
bless

With fruit the vines that round the
thatch-eves run;

To bend with apples the mossed cottage-
trees, 5

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the
core;

To swell the gourd, and plump the
hazel shells

With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the
bees,

Until they think warm days will never
cease, 10

For Summer has o'er-brimmed their
clammy cells!

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy
store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may
find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing
wind; 15

Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies,
while thy hook

Spare the next swath and all its
twined flowers;

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost
keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook; 20

Or by a cider-press, with patient look,

Thou watchest the last oozings, hours
by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay,
where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music
too, —

While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying
day, 25

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy
hue:

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats
mourn

Among the river shallows, borne aloft,

Or sinking, as the light wind lives or
dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from
hilly bourn; 30

Hedge-crickets sing; and now with
treble soft

The red-breast whistles from a garden-
croft;

And gathering swallows twitter in the
skies.

HYPERION

A FRAGMENT

(1818-19)

BOOK FIRST

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale

Far sunken from the healthy breath of
morn,

Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one
star,

Sat gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,

Still as the silence round about his lair. 5
 Forest on forest hung about his head
 Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was
 there,
 Not so much life as on a summer's day
 Robs not one light seed from the feathered
 grass;
 But where the dead leaf fell, there did it
 rest. 10
 A stream went voiceless by, — still dead-
 ened more
 By reason of his fallen divinity
 Spreading a shade: the naiad 'mid her
 reeds
 Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large footmarks
 went, 15
 No further than to where his feet had
 strayed,
 And slept there since. Upon the sodden
 ground
 His old right hand lay nerveless, listless,
 dead,
 Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were
 closed;
 While his bowed head seemed list'ning to
 the Earth, 20
 His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seemed no force could wake him from
 his place;
 But there came one, who with a kindred
 hand
 Touched his wide shoulders, after bending
 low
 With reverence, though to one who knew
 it not. 25
 She was a goddess of the infant world;
 By her in stature the tall Amazon
 Had stood a pigmy's height: she would
 have ta'en
 Achilles by the hair and bent his neck,
 Or with a finger stayed Ixion's wheel. 30
 Her face was large as that of Memphian
 sphinx,
 Pedestalled haply in a palace court,
 When sages looked to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh! how unlike marble was that face:

How beautiful, if sorrow had not made 35
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun:
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen
 rear 40
 Was with its storèd thunder laboring up.
 One hand she pressed upon that aching
 spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just
 there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck 45
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she
 spake
 In solemn tenor and deep organ tone:
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble
 tongue
 Would come in these like accents — O
 how frail 50
 To that large utterance of the early gods!

"Saturn, look up! — though wherefore,
 poor old King?
 I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
 I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest
 thou?'
 For heaven is parted from thee, and the
 earth 55
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a
 god;
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
 Has from thy sceptre passed; and all the
 air
 Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new com-
 mand, 60
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
 And thy sharp lightning, in unpractised
 hands,
 Scorches and burns our once serene
 domain.
 O aching time! O moments big as years!
 All as ye pass swell out the monstrous
 truth, 65
 And press it so upon our weary griefs
 That unbelief has not a space to breathe.

Saturn, sleep on — O thoughtless, why
did I

Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?

Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes? 70
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I
weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-robed senators of mighty
woods,

Tall oaks, branch-charmèd by the earnest
stars,

Dream, and so dream all night without
a stir, 75

Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies
off,

As if the ebbing air had but one wave:
So came these words and went, — the
while in tears

She touched her fair large forehead to
the ground, 80

Just where her falling hair might be out-
spread

A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.

One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motion-
less, 85

Like natural sculpture in cathedral cav-
ern, —

The frozen God still couchant on the
earth,

And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:

Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom
gone, 90

And all the gloom and sorrow of the
place,

And that fair kneeling goddess; and then
spake,

As with a palsied tongue, and while his
beard

Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:

"O tender spouse of gold Hyperion, 95
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it.

Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's; tell me if thou hear'st the
voice

Of Saturn; tell me if this wrinkling
brow, 100

Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had
power

To make me desolate? whence came the
strength?

How was it nurtured to such bursting
forth,

While Fate seemed strangled in my nerv-
ous grasp? 105

But it is so; and I am smothered up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's harvest-
ing, 110

And all those acts which deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in. — I am
gone

Away from my own bosom: I have left
My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne and where
I sit 115

Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea,
search!

Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them
round

Upon all space: space starred, and lorn
of light;

Space regioned with life-air; and barren
void;

Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of
hell. — 120

Search, Thea, search! and tell me if thou
seest

A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
A heaven he lost erewhile: it must — it
must

Be of ripe progress — Saturn must be
King. 125

Yes, there must be a golden victory:
There must be gods thrown down, and
trumpets blown

Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival

Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir 130
 Of strings in hollow shells; and there
 shall be
 Beautiful things made new, for the sur-
 prise
 Of the sky-children: I will give com-
 mand—
 Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?"

This passion lifted him upon his feet, 135
 And made his hands to struggle in the
 air,
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with
 sweat,
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing
 deep.
 A little time, and then again he
 snatched 140

Utterance thus: "But cannot I create?
 Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
 Another world, another universe,
 To overbear and crumble this to nought?
 Where is another chaos? Where?"—

That word 145
 Found way unto Olympus, and made
 quake

The rebel three. — Thea was startled up,
 And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
 As thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full
 of awe:

"This cheers our fallen house: come to
 our friends, 150

O Saturn! come away, and give them
 heart;

I know the covert, for thence came I
 hither."

Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she
 went

With backward footing through the shade
 a space:

He followed, and she turned to lead the
 way 155

Through agèd boughs, that yielded like
 the mist

Which eagles cleave upmounting from their
 nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears
 were shed,

More sorrow like to this, and such like
 woe,

Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of
 scribe: 160

The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-
 bound,

Groaned for the old allegiance once more,
 And listened in sharp pain for Saturn's
 voice.

But one of the whole mammoth-brood still
 kept

His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty: 165
 Blazing Hyperion on his orbèd fire

Still sat, still snuffed the incense teeming
 up

From man to the sun's God; yet insecure.
 For as among us mortals omens drear

Fright and perplex, so also shuddered
 he— 170

Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated
 screech,

Or the familiar visiting of one
 Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,

Or prophesying of the midnight lamp;
 But horrors portioned to a giant nerve, 175

Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace
 bright,

Bastioned with pyramids of glowing gold,
 And touched with shade of bronzed
 obelisks,

Glared a blood-red through all its thou-
 sand courts,

Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries; 180
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds

Flushed angerly: while sometimes eagle's
 wings,

Unseen before by gods or wondering men,
 Darkened the place; and neighing steeds

were heard,
 Not heard before by gods or wondering
 men. 185

Also, when he would taste the spicy
 wreaths

Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred
 hills,

Instead of sweets his ample palate took
 Savor of poisonous brass and metal sick.

And so, when harbored in the sleepy
west, 190

After the full completion of fair day, —
For rest divine upon exalted couch
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to
hall; 195
While far within each aisle and deep
recess,

His wingèd minions in close clusters stood,
Amazed and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting
troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements
and towers. 200

Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy
trance,
Went step for step with Thea through
the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the
west.

Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew
ope 205
In smoothest silence, save what solemn
tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of
sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathèd
melodies;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the
eye, 210

That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He entered, but he entered full of
wrath;
His flaming robes streamed out beyond his
heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire, 215
That scared away the meek ethereal
Hours,
And made their dove-wings tremble. On
he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault
to vault,

Through bowers of fragrant and en-
wreathèd light,

And diamond-pavèd lustrous long ar-
cades, 220

Until he reached the great main cupola.
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped
his foot,

And from the basements deep to the high
towers

Jarred his own golden region; and be-
fore

The quavering thunder thereupon had
ceased, 225

His voice leapt out, despite of godlike
curb,

To this result: "O dreams of day and
night!

O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!

O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!

O lank-eared phantoms of black-weeded
pools! 230

Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye?
why

Is my eternal essence thus distraught

To see and to behold these horrors new?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?

Am I to leave this haven of my rest, 235

This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,

This calm luxuriance of blissful light,

These crystalline pavilions, and pure
fanes,

Of all my lucent empire? It is left

Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine. 240

The blaze, the splendor, and the sym-
metry,

I cannot see—but darkness, death and
darkness.

Even here, into my centre of repose,

The shady visions come to domineer,

Insult, and blind, and stifle up my
pomp. — 245

Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny
robes!

Over the fiery frontier of my realms

I will advance a terrible right arm

Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel
Jove,

And bid old Saturn take his throne
again." 250

He spake, and ceased, the while a
 heavier threat
 Held struggle with his throat but came
 not forth:
 For as in theatres of crowded men
 Hubbub increases more they call out
 "Hush!"
 So at Hyperion's words the phantoms
 pale 255
 Bestirred themselves, thrice horrible and
 cold;
 And from the mirrored level where he
 stood
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
 At this, through all his bulk an agony
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the
 crown, 260
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
 Making slow way, with head and neck
 convulsed
 From over-strained might. Released, he
 fled
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy
 hours
 Before the dawn in season due should
 blush, 265
 He breathed fierce breath against the
 sleepy portals,
 Cleared them of heavy vapors, burst them
 wide
 Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
 Each day from east to west the heavens
 through, 270
 Spun around in sable curtaining of
 clouds:
 Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and
 hid,
 But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
 Circles, and arcs, and broad-belted colure,
 Glowed through, and wrought upon the
 muffling dark 275
 Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir
 deep
 Up to the zenith, — hieroglyphics old,
 Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
 Then living on the earth, with laboring
 thought
 Won from the gaze of many centuries: 280

Now lost, save what we find on remnants
 huge
 Of stone, or marble swart; their import
 gone,
 Their wisdom long since fled. — Two
 wings this orb
 Possessed for glory, two fair argent
 wings,
 Ever exalted at the God's approach: 285
 And now, from forth the gloom their
 plumes immense
 Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded
 were;
 While still the dazzling globe maintained
 eclipse,
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
 Fain would he have commanded, fain
 took throne 290
 And bid the day begin, if but for change.
 He might not! — no, though a primeval
 god:
 The sacred seasons might not be disturbed.
 Therefore the operations of the dawn
 Stayed in their birth, even as here 'tis
 told. 295
 Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
 Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
 Opened upon the dusk demesnes of night;
 And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new
 woes,
 Unused to bend, by hard compulsion
 bent 300
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,
 He stretched himself in grief and radiance
 faint.

 There as he lay, the Heaven with its
 stars 305
 Looked down on him with pity; and the
 voice
 Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
 Thus whispered low and solemn in his
 ear:
 "O brightest of my children dear, earth-
 born
 And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries 310
 All unrevealed even to the powers

Which met at thy creating; at whose joy
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures
soft,

I, Cælus, wonder, how they came and
whence;

And at the fruits thereof, what shapes they
be, 315

Distinct, and visible, — symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beautiful life
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space!
Of these new-formed art thou, O brightest
child!

Of these, thy brethren and the god-
desses! 320

There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
I saw my first-born tumbled from his
throne!

To me his arms were spread, to me his
voice

Found way from forth the thunders round
his head! 325

Pale wox I, and in vapors hid my face.
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague
fear there is:

For I have seen my sons most unlike
gods.

Divine ye were created; and divine
In sad demeanor, solemn, undisturbed, 330
Unruffled, like high gods, ye lived and
ruled:

Now I behold in you fear, hope, and
wrath;

Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
In men who die. This is the grief, O
Son! 335

Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and
fall!

Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident
god;

And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence. — I am but a voice; 340
My life is but the life of winds and tides,
No more than winds and tides can I
avail. —

But thou canst! — Be thou therefore in
the van

Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's
barb

Before the tense string murmur. — To the
earth! 345

For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his
woes.

Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright
sun,

And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."

Ere half this region-whisper had come
down,

Hyperion arose, and on the stars 350
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them
wide

Until it ceased; and still he kept them
wide:

And still they were the same bright patient
stars.

Then with a slow incline of his broad
breast,

Like to a diver in the pearly seas, 355
Forward he stooped over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep
night.

BOOK SECOND

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide
wings,

Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gained with Thea that sad
place

Where Cybele and the bruised Titans
mourned.

It was a den where no insulting light 5
Could glimmer on their tears; where their
own groans

They felt, but heard not, for the solid
roar

Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents
hoarse,

Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that
seemed 10

Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous
horns;

And thus in thousand hugest phantasies

Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
 Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat
 upon, 15
 Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
 Stubbored with iron. All were not as-
 sembled:
 Some chained in torture, and some wan-
 dering,
 Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
 Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon, 20
 With many more, the brawnier in as-
 sault,
 Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
 Dungeoned in opaque element, to keep
 Their clenched teeth still clenched, and
 all their limbs
 Locked up like veins of metal, cramped
 and screwed; 25
 Without a motion, save of their big hearts
 Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed
 With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of
 pulse.
 Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
 Far from her moon had Phœbe wan-
 derèd; 30
 And many else were free to roam abroad.
 But for the main, here found they covert
 drear.
 Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
 Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal
 cirque
 Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor, 35
 When the chill rain begins at shut of
 eve,
 In dull November, and their chancel
 vault,
 The heaven itself, is blinded throughout
 night.
 Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbor
 gave
 Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40

Crœus was one; his ponderous iron mace
 Lay by him, and a shattered rib of rock
 Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and
 pined.
 Iäpetus another; in his grasp,
 A serpent's plashy neck; its barbèd
 tongue 45

Squeezed from the gorge, and all its un-
 curled length
 Dead; and because the creature could not
 spit
 Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
 Next, Cottus: prone he lay, chin upper-
 most,
 As though in pain; for still upon the
 flint 50
 He ground severe his skull, with open
 mouth
 And eyes at horrid working. Nearest
 him
 Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
 Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
 Though feminine, than any of her sons. 55
 More thought than woe was in her dusky
 face,
 For she was prophesying of her glory;
 And in her wide imagination stood
 Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
 By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles. 60
 Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
 So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
 Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
 Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,
 Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate
 else, 65
 Shadowed Enceladus; once tame and mild
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
 Now tiger-passioned, lion-thoughted,
 wroth,
 He meditated, plotted, and even now
 Was hurling mountains in that second
 war, 70
 Not long delayed, that scared the younger
 gods
 To hide themselves in forms of beast and
 bird.
 Nor far hence Atlas; and beside him
 prone
 Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbored
 close
 Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap 75
 Sobbed Clymene among her tangled hair.
 In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
 Of Ops the queen all clouded round from
 sight,—
 No shape distinguishable, more than when

Thick night confounds the pine-tops with
the clouds. 80

And many else whose names may not be
told:

For when the Muse's wings are airward
spread,

Who shall delay her flight? And she
must chant

Of Saturn and his guide, who now had
climbed

With damp and slippery footing from a
depth 85

More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appeared, and up their stature
grew

Till on the level height their steps found
ease.

Then Thea spread abroad her trembling
arms

Upon the precincts of this nest of pain, 90
And sidelong fixed her eye on Saturn's
face.

There saw she direst strife: the supreme
God

At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all
despair. 95

Against these plagues he strove in vain:
for Fate

Had poured a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison. So that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him
pass

First onwards in, among the fallen
tribe. 100

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fevered more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same
bruise,

So Saturn, as he walked into the midst, 105
Felt faint, and would have sunk among
the rest,

But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at
once

Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,

"Titans, behold your God!" At which
some groaned; 110

Some started on their feet; some also
shouted;

Some wept, some wailed; all bowed with
reverence;

And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Showed her pale cheeks, and all her fore-
head wan,

Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow
eyes. 115

There is a roaring in the bleak-grown
pines

When Winter lifts his voice: there is a
noise

Among immortals when a god gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to
load

His tongue with the full weight of utter-
less thought, 120

With thunder, and with music, and with
pomp.

Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown
pines;

Which, when it ceases in this mountained
world,

No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice there-
from 125

Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt
short,

Leave the dinned air vibrating silverly.

Thus grew it up: "Not in my own sad
breast,

Which is its own great judge and searcher
out, 130

Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
Not in the legends of the first of days,

Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
Which starry Uranus with finger bright

Saved from the shores of darkness, when
the waves 135

Low-ebbed still hid it up in shallow
gloom—

And the which book ye know I ever kept
For my firm-based footstool—ah, infirm!
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent

Of element, earth, water, air, and fire, 140
At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling
One against one, or two, or three, or
all

Each several one against the other three,—
As fire with air loud warring when rain-
floods

Drown both, and press them both against
earth's face, 145

Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple
wrath

Unhinges the poor world—not in that
strife,

Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read
it deep,

Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
No, nowhere can unriddle, though I
search 150

And pore on Nature's universal scroll
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
The first-born of all shaped and palpable
gods,

Should cower beneath what, in compar-
ison,

Is untremendous might. Yet ye are
here,— 155

O'erwhelmed, and spurned, and battered,
ye are here!

O Titans, shall I say 'Arise!'—Ye groan.
Shall I say 'Crouch!'—Ye groan. What
can I then?—

O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!
What can I!—Tell me, all ye brethren
Gods, 160

How we can war, how engine our great
wrath!

O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's
ear

Is all a-hungered. Thou, Oceanus,
Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face
I see, astonished, that severe content 165
Which comes of thought and musing: give
us help!"

So ended Saturn; and the God of the
Sea,

Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170

In murmurs, which his first-endeavoring
tongue

Caught infant-like from the far-foamed
sands.

"O ye, whom wrath consumes! who pas-
sion-stung,

Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!

Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears: 175

My voice is not a bellows unto ire.

Yet listen, 'ye who will, whilst I bring
proof

How ye, perforce, must be content to
stoop;

And in the proof much comfort will I
give,

If ye will take that comfort in its
truth. 180

We fall by course of Nature's law, not
force

Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn,
thou

Hast sifted well the atom-universe.

But for this reason, that thou art the
King,

And only blind from sheer supremacy, 185

One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,

Through which I wandered to eternal
truth.

And first, as thou wast not the first of
powers,

So art thou not the last; it cannot be:

Thou art not the beginning nor the
end. 190

From chaos and parental darkness came

Light, the first fruits of that intestine
broil,

That sullen ferment, which for wondrous
ends

Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour
came,

And with it light; and light, engender-
ing 195

Upon its own producer, forthwith touched
The whole enormous matter into life.

Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were mani-
fest:

Then thou first-born, and we the giant-
race, 200

Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous
realms.

Now comes the pain of truth, to whom
'tis pain,—

O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark
well! 205

As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer
far

Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though
once chiefs;

And as we show beyond that Heaven
and Earth,

In form and shape compact and beau-
tiful,

In will, in action free, companionship, 210
And thousand other signs of purer life:

So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of
us

And fated to excel us, as we pass

In glory that old Darkness. Nor are
we 215

Thereby more conquered, than by us the
rule

Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull
soil

Quarrel with the proud forests it hath
fed,

And feedeth still, more comely than itself?
Can it deny the chieftom of green
groves? 220

Or shall the tree be envious of the dove—

Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
To wander wherewithal and find its joys?

We are such forest-trees, and our fair
boughs

Have bred forth, not pale solitary
doves, 225

But eagles golden-feathered, who do
tower

Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof: for 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in
might:

Yea, by that law, another race may
drive 230

Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.

Have ye beheld the young God of the
Seas,

My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
Have ye beheld his chariot, foamed along
By noble wingèd creatures he hath
made? 235

I saw him on the calmèd waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforced me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire. Farewell sad I took,
And hither came, to see how dolorous
fate 240

Had wrought upon ye; and how I might
best

Give consolation in this woe extreme.
Receive the truth, and let it be your
balm."

Whether through pozed conviction, or
disdain,

They guarded silence, when Oceanus 245
Left murmuring, what deepest thought
can tell?

But so it was, none answered for a
space,—

Save one whom none regarded, Clymene;
And yet she answered not, only com-
plained,

With hectic lips, and eyes uplooking
mild, 250

Thus wording timidly among the fierce:
"O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
And this thing woe crept in among our
hearts,

There to remain for ever, as I fear. 255

I would not bode of evil, if I thought
So weak a creature could turn off the help
Which by just right should come of mighty
gods;

Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me
weep, 260

And know that we had parted from all
hope.

I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathed from
a land

Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.

Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief, 265
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth.
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthèd
shell 270

And murmured into it, and made
melody —

O melody no more! For while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the
breeze

The dull shell's echo, from a bowery
strand

Just opposite, an island of the sea, 275
There came enchantment with the shift-
ing wind,

That did both drown and keep alive my
ears.

I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave filled it, as my sense was
filled

With that new blissful golden melody. 280
A living death was in each gush of sounds,
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from
their string:

And then another, then another strain, 285
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wingèd instead of silent
plumes,

To hover round my head, and make me
sick

Of joy and grief at once. Grief over-
came,

And I was stopping up my frantic ears, 290
When, past all hindrance of my trembling
hands,

A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all
tune,

And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
The morning-bright Apollo! young
Apollo!'

I fled; it followed me, and cried
'Apollo!' 295

O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt

Those pains of mine, — O Saturn, hadst
thou felt, —

Ye would not call this too indulgèd
tongue

Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be
heard."

So far her voice flowed on, like timo-
rous brook 300

That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea. But sea it
met,

And shuddered; for the overwhelming
voice

Of huge Enceladus swallowed it in wrath.
The ponderous syllables, like sullen
waves 305

In the half glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his
arm

He leaned, — not rising, from supreme
contempt:

"Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
Or to the over-foolish, giant Gods? 310
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
That rebel Jove's whole armory were
spent,

Not world on world upon these shoulders
piled,

Could agonize me more than baby-words
In midst of this dethronement horrible. 315
Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans
all!

Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the
Waves,

Thy scalding in the seas? What, have I
roused 320

Your spleens with so few simple words
as these?

O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
Wide glaring for revenge!" — As this he
said,

He lifted up his stature vast, and
stood, 325

Still without intermission speaking thus:

"Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to
 burn,
 And purge the ether of our enemies:
 How to feed fierce the crooked stings of
 fire,
 And singe away the swollen clouds of
 Jove, 330
 Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
 O let him feel the evil he hath done!
 For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
 Much pain have I for more than loss of
 realms:
 The days of peace and slumberous calm
 are fled; 335
 Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
 When all the fair Existences of heaven
 Came open-eyed to guess what we would
 speak —
 That was before our brows were taught
 to frown,
 Before our lips knew else but solemn
 sounds; 340
 That was before we knew the winged
 thing,
 Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
 And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
 Our brightest brother, still is undis-
 graced —
 Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!" 345

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
 And they beheld, while still Hyperion's
 name
 Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
 A pallid gleam across his features stern:
 Not savage, for he saw full many a
 god 350
 Wroth as himself. He looked upon them
 all,
 And in each face he saw a gleam of
 light,
 But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar
 locks
 Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
 When the prow sweeps into a midnight
 cove. 355
 In pale and silver silence they remained,
 Till suddenly a splendor, like the morn,
 Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,

All the sad spaces of oblivion,
 And every gulf, and every chasm old, 360
 And every height, and every sullen depth,
 Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented
 streams:
 And all the everlasting cataracts,
 And all the headlong torrents far and
 near,
 Mantled before in darkness and huge
 shade, 365
 Now saw the light and made it terrible.

It was Hyperion — a granite peak
 His bright feet touched, and there he
 stayed to view
 The misery his brilliance had betrayed
 To the most hateful seeing of itself. 370
 Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
 Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
 In midst of his own brightness, like the
 bulk
 Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
 To one who travels from the dusking
 East: 375
 Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's
 harp
 He uttered, while his hands contempla-
 tive
 He pressed together, and in silence stood.
 Despondence seized again the fallen gods
 At sight of the dejected King of Day, 380
 And many hid their faces from the light.
 But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
 Among the brotherhood; and, at their
 glare,
 Uprose Iâpetus, and Creüs too,
 And Phorcus, sea-born, and together
 strode 385
 To where he towered on his eminence.
 There those four shouted forth old
 Saturn's name:
 Hyperion from the peak loud answered,
 "Saturn!"
 Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
 In whose face was no joy, though all the
 gods 390
 Gave from their hollow throats the name
 of "Saturn!"

BOOK THIRD

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazèd were those Titans utterly.

O leave them, Muse! O leave them to
their woes;

For thou art weak to sing such tumults
dire.

A solitary sorrow best befits 5

Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief:
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt
find

Many a fallen old divinity
Wandering in vain about bewildered
shores.

Meantime touch piously the Delphic
harp, 10

And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil
hue:

Let the rose glow intense and warm the
air; 15

And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipped
shells,

On sands or in great deeps, vermilion
turn 20

Through all their labyrinths; and let the
maid

Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss
surprised!

Chief-isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and
beech, 25

In which the zephyr breathes the loudest
song,

And hazels thick, dark-stemmed beneath
the shade:

Apollo is once more the golden theme!

Where was he, when the Giant of the
Sun

Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his
peers? 30

Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered
forth

Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale. 35
The nightingale had ceased, and a few
stars

Were lingering in the heavens, while the
thrush

Began calm-throated. Throughout all the
isle

There was no covert, no retirèd cave,
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of
waves, 40

Though scarcely heard in many a green
recess.

He listened, and he wept, and his bright
tears

Went trickling down the golden bow he
held.

Thus with half-shut suffusèd eyes he
stood, —

While from beneath some cumbrous
boughs hard by, 45

With solemn step an awful Goddess came;
And there was purport in her looks for
him,

Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplexed, the while melodiously he said:
"How cam'st thou over the unfooted
sea? 50

Or hath that antique mien and robèd
form

Moved in these vales invisible till now?

Sure I have heard those vestments sweep-
ing o'er

The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool mid-forest. Surely I have
traced 55

The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the
flowers

Lift up their heads, as still the whisper
passed.

Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
And their eternal calm, and all that
face, 60

Or I have dreamed."

"Yes," said the supreme shape,
 "Thou hast dreamed of me; and awak-
 ing up
 Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side, —
 Whose strings touched by thy fingers, all
 the vast
 Unwearied ear of the whole universe 65
 Listened in pain and pleasure at the birth
 Of such new tuneful wonder. \ Is't not
 strange
 That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell
 me, youth,
 What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am
 sad
 When thou dost shed a tear. Explain
 thy griefs 70
 To one who in this lonely isle hath been
 The watcher of thy sleep and hours of
 life,
 From the young day when first thy infant
 hand
 Plucked witless the weak flowers, till
 thine arm
 Could bend that bow heroic to all times. 75
 Show thy heart's secret to an ancient
 power
 Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
 For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
 Of loveliness new born."

Apollo then,

With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes, 80
 Thus answered, while his white melodious
 throat
 Throbb'd with the syllables: "Mne-
 mosyne!
 Thy name is on my tongue, I know not
 how!
 Why should I tell thee what thou so
 well seest?
 Why should I strive to show what from
 thy lips 85
 Would come no mystery? For me —
 dark, dark,
 And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
 I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
 Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
 And then upon the grass I sit, and
 moan, 90

Like one who once had wings. — O why
 should I
 Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liege-
 less air
 Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
 Spurn the green turf as hateful to my
 feet?
 Goddess benign, point forth some un-
 known thing: 95
 Are there not other regions than this isle?
 What are the stars? There is the sun,
 the sun!
 And the most patient brilliance of the
 moon!
 And stars by thousands! Point me out
 the way
 To any one particular beauteous star, 100
 And I will flit into it with my lyre,
 And make its silvery splendor pant with
 bliss.
 I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where
 is power?
 Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
 Makes this alarum in the elements, 105
 While I here idle listen on the shores
 In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
 O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
 That waileth every morn and eventide,
 Tell me why thus I rave, about these
 groves! 110
 Mute thou remainest — Mute! yet I can
 read
 A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
 Knowledge enormous makes a god of me.
 Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events,
 rebellions,
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, 115
 Creations and destroyings, all at once
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
 And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
 And so become immortal."

Thus the God, 120

While his enkindled eyes, with level
 glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast
 kept
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.

Soon wild commotions shook him, and
made flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs; 125
Most like the struggle at the gate of
death;
Or liker still to one who should take
leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce
convulse
Die into life: so young Apollo an-
guished. 130
His very hair, his golden tresses famed,
Kept undulation round his eager neck.
During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied.—At
length
Apollo shrieked—and lo! from all his
limbs 135
Celestial

LAMIA

(1819)

PART FIRST

Upon a time, before the faery broods
Drove nymph and satyr from the pros-
perous woods,—
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasped with dewy
gem,
Frighted away the dryads and the fauns 5
From rushes green, and brakes, and cow-
slipped lawns,—
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous
theft:
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the
sight 10
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofèd satyrs
knelt;
At whose white feet the languid tritons
poured 15
Pearls, while on land they withered and
adored.

Fast by the springs where she to bathe was
wont,
And in those meads where sometimes she
might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any
Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlocked to
choose. 20
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his wingèd heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blushed into roses 'mid his golden hair, 25
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders
bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood,
he flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion
new,
And wound with many a river to its
head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepared
her secret bed. 30
In vain: the sweet nymph might nowhere
be found;
And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the wood-gods, and even the very
trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful
voice,— 35
Such as, once heard, in gentle heart de-
stroys
All pain but pity. Thus the lone voice
spake:
"When from this wreathèd tomb shall I
awake?
When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy
strife 40
Of hearts and lips? Ah, miserable me!"
The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing in his
speed
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake, 45
Bright, and cirque-couchant, in a dusky
brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling
 hue,
 Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
 Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
 Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson
 barred; 50
 And full of silver moons, that, as she
 breathed,
 Dissolved, or brighter shone, or inter-
 wreathed
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapes-
 tries —
 So rainbow-sided, touched with miseries,
 She seemed at once some penanced lady
 elf, 55
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's
 self.
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar.
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-
 sweet!
 She had a woman's mouth with all its
 pearls complete. 60
 And for her eyes: what could such eyes
 do there
 But weep, and weep, that they were born
 so fair, —
 As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian
 air?
 Her throat was serpent, but the words she
 spake
 Came as through bubbling honey, for
 Love's sake, 65
 And thus — while Hermes on his pinions
 lay,
 Like a stooped falcon ere he takes his
 prey:

"Fair Hermes! crowned with feathers,
 fluttering light,
 I had a splendid dream of thee last night.
 I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold, 70
 Among the Gods upon Olympus old, —
 The only sad one: for thou didst not hear
 The soft, lute-fingered Muses chanting
 clear,
 Nor even Apollo when he sang alone, —
 Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long
 melodious moan. 75

I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple
 flakes,
 Break amorous through the clouds, as
 morning breaks,
 And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
 Strike for the Cretan isle — and here thou
 art!
 Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the
 maid?" 80
 Whereat the Star of Lethe not delayed
 His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
 "Thou smooth-lipped serpent, surely high-
 inspired!
 Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy
 eyes,
 Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise, 85
 Telling me only where my nymph is
 fled, —
 Where she doth breathe!" — "Bright
 planet, thou hast said,"
 Returned the snake, "but seal with oaths,
 fair God!" —
 "I swear," said Hermes, "by my serpent-
 rod,
 And by thine eyes, and by thy starry
 crown!" 90
 Light flew his earnest words, among the
 blossoms blown.
 Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
 "Too frail of heart! For this lost nymph
 of thine,
 Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
 About these thornless wilds: her pleasant
 days 95
 She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
 Leave traces in the grass and flowers
 sweet;
 From weary tendrils, and bowed branches
 green,
 She plucks the fruit unseen; she bathes un-
 seen.
 And by my power is her beauty veiled 100
 To keep it unaffronted, unassailed
 By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
 Of satyrs, fauns, and bleared Silenus'
 sighs.
 Pale grew her immortality, for woe
 Of all these lovers; and she grieved so 105
 I took compassion on her, bade her steep

Her hair in weird syrops that would keep
 Her loveliness invisible, yet free
 To wander as she loves, in liberty.
 Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou
 alone 110
 If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my
 boon!"

Then, once again, the charmed God
 began
 An oath, and through the serpent's ears it
 ran
 Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
 Ravished she lifted her Circean head, 115
 Blushed a live damask, and swift-lisping
 said:

"I was a woman, — let me have once more
 A woman's shape, and charming as before.
 I love a youth of Corinth — O the bliss!
 Give me my woman's form, and place me
 where he is. 120

Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy
 brow,
 And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even
 now."

The God on half-shut feathers sank
 serene:

She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was
 seen

Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling
 on the green. 125

It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
 Real are the dreams of gods, and smoothly
 pass

Their pleasures in a long immortal
 dream.

One warm, flushed moment, hovering, it
 might seem

Dashed by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he
 burned; 130

Then, lighting on the printless verdure,
 turned

To the swooned serpent, and with languid
 arm,

Delicate, put to proof the lithe caducean
 charm.

So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
 Full of adoring tears and blandish-
 ment, 135

And towards her stept: she, like a moon in
 wane,

Faded before him, cowered, nor could re-
 strain

Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
 That faints into itself at evening hour.

But the God fostering her chilled hand, 140
 She felt the warmth, her eyelids opened
 bland,

And, like new flowers at morning song of
 bees,

Bloomed, and gave up her honey to the
 lees.

Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
 Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers

do. 145

Left to herself, the serpent now began
 To change: her elfin blood in madness ran,
 Her mouth foamed, and the grass, there-
 with besprent,

Withered at dew so sweet and virulent;
 Her eyes in torture fixed, and anguish
 drear, 150

Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all
 sear,

Flashed phosphor and sharp sparks, with-
 out one cooling tear.

The colors all inflamed throughout her
 train,

She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet
 pain.

A deep volcanian yellow took the place 155
 Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;

And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
 Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden
 brede:

Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks
 and bars,

Eclipsed her crescents, and licked up her
 stars. 160

So that, in moments few, she was undrest
 Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,

And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,
 Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.

Still shone her crown; that vanished, —
 also she 165

Melted and disappeared as suddenly;
 And in the air, her new voice, luting soft,

Cried, "Lycius! gentle Lycius!" — Borne aloft

With the bright mists about the mountains hoar,

These words dissolved: Crete's forests heard no more. 170

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright, A full-born beauty new and exquisite?

She fled into that valley they pass o'er Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore;

And rested at the foot of those wild hills, 175

The rugged founts of the Peræan rills, And of that other ridge whose barren back Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,

Southwestward to Cleone. There she stood,

About a young bird's flutter from a wood, 180

Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread, By a clear pool, wherein she passionèd To see herself escaped from so sore ills, While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius! — for she was a maid 185

More beautiful than ever twisted braid, Or sighed, or blushed, or on spring-flowered lea

Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy, — A virgin purest-lipped, yet in the lore Of love deep learned, to the red heart's core: 190

Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain To unperplex bliss from its neighbor pain; Define their pettish limits, and estrange Their points of contact, and swift counter-change;

Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart 195

Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art; As though in Cupid's college she had spent Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,

And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so faerily 200

By the wayside to linger, we shall see.

But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse

And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,

Of all she list, strange or magnificent, — How, ever, where she willed, her spirit went: 205

Whether to faint Elysium; or where

Down through tress-lifting waves the nereids fair

Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair;

Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,

Stretched out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine; 210

Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.

And sometimes into cities she would send Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;

And once, while among mortals dreaming thus, 215

She saw the young Corinthian Lycius Charioting foremost in the envious race, Like a young Jove with calm uneager face, And fell into a swooning love of him.

Now, on the moth-time of that evening dim 220

He would return that way, as well she knew,

To Corinth from the shore; for freshly blew

The eastern soft wind, and his galley now

Grated the quay-stones with her brazen prow

In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle 225

Fresh anchored; whither he had been awhile

To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.

Jove heard his vows, and bettered his desire:

For by some freakful chance he made
retire 230
From his companions, and set forth to
walk,
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth
talk.

Over the solitary hills he fared,
Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star
appeared
His phantasy was lost, where reason
fades, 235
In the calmed twilight of Platonic shades.
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more
near —

Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
His silent sandals swept the mossy green;
So neighbored to him, and yet so un-
seen, 240

She stood. He passed, shut up in mys-
teries,
His mind wrapped like his mantle, while
her eyes

Followed his steps, and her neck regal
white

Turned — syllabing thus, "Ah, Lycius
bright! 244

And will you leave me on the hills alone?
Lycius, look back! and be some pity
shown."

He did, not with cold wonder fearingly,
But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice:
For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seemed he had loved them a whole
summer long. 250

And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty
up,

Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
And still the cup was full, — while he,
afraid

Lest she should vanish ere his lips had paid
Due adoration, thus began to adore — 255
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his
chain so sure:

"Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah,
Goddess, see

Whether my eyes can ever turn from
thee!

For pity do not this sad heart belie —

Even as thou vanishest so I shall die. 260
Stay! though a naiad of the rivers, stay!

To thy far wishes will thy streams obey;
Stay! though the greenest woods be thy
domain,

Alone they can drink up the morning
rain:

Though a descended Pleiad, will not
one 265

Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy
shine?

So sweetly to these ravished ears of mine
Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou
shouldst fade,

Thy memory will waste me to a shade: 270
For pity do not melt!" — "If I should
stay,"

Said Lamia, "here, upon this floor of
clay,

And pain my steps upon these flowers too
rough,

What canst thou say or do of charm
enough

To dull the nice remembrance of my
home? 275

Thou canst not ask me with thee here to
roam

Over these hills and vales, where no joy
is, —

Empty of immortality and bliss!

Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must
know

That finer spirits cannot breathe below 280
In human climes, and live: alas, poor
youth,

What taste of purer air hast thou to
soothe

My essence? What serener palaces,
Where I may all my many senses please,
And by mysterious sleights a hundred
thirsts appease? 285

It cannot be — Adieu!" So said, she rose
Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick
to lose

The amorous promise of her lone com-
plain,

Swooned, murmuring of love, and pale
with pain.

The cruel lady, without any show 290
 Of sorrow for her tender favorite's woe,
 But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
 With brighter eyes, and slow amenity,
 Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
 The life she had so tangled in her
 mesh. 295
 And as he from one trance was wakening
 Into another, she began to sing,
 Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every
 thing,
 A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
 While, like held breath, the stars drew in
 their panting fires. 300
 And then she whispered in such trembling
 tone
 As those who, safe together met alone
 For the first time through many anguished
 days,
 Use other speech than looks,—bidding
 him raise
 His drooping head, and clear his soul of
 doubt, 305
 For that she was a woman, and without
 Any more subtle fluid in her veins
 Than throbbing blood, and that the self-
 same pains
 Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
 And next she wondered how his eyes could
 miss 310
 Her face so long in Corinth, where, she
 said,
 She dwelt but half retired, and there had
 led
 Days happy as the gold coin could invent
 Without the aid of love,—yet in content
 Till she saw him, as once she passed him
 by, 315
 Where 'gainst a column he leant thought-
 fully
 At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets
 heaped
 Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly
 reaped
 Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before
 The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no
 more, 320
 But wept alone those days, for why should
 she adore?

Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
 To see her still, and singing so sweet lays:
 Then from amaze into delight he fell
 To hear her whisper woman's lore so
 well; 325
 And every word she spake enticed him on
 To unperplexed delight and pleasure
 known.
 Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
 Of the sweets of fairies, peris, goddesses,—
 There is not such a treat among them
 all, 330
 Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
 As a real woman, lineal indeed
 From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's
 seed.
 Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged
 aright,
 That Lycius could not love in half a
 fright; 335
 So threw the goddess off, and won his
 heart
 More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
 With no more awe than what her beauty
 gave,
 That, while it smote, still guaranteed to
 save.
 Lycius to all made eloquent reply, 340
 Marrying to every word a twinborn
 sigh:
 And last, pointing to Corinth, asked her
 sweet,
 If 'twas too far that night for her soft
 feet.
 The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
 Made, by a spell, the triple league de-
 crease 345
 To a few paces,—not at all surmised
 By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised.
 They passed the city gates, he knew not
 how,
 So noiseless, and he never thought to
 know.
 As men talk in a dream, so Corinth
 all, 350
 Throughout her palaces imperial,
 And all her populous streets and temples
 lewd,

Muttered, like tempest in the distance
 brewed,
 To the wide-spreaded night above her
 towers.
 Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool
 hours, 355
 Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement
 white,
 Companioned or alone; while many a light
 Flared, here and there, from wealthy festi-
 vals,
 And threw their moving shadows on the
 walls,
 Or found them clustered in the corniced
 shade 360
 Of some arched temple door, or dusky
 colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in
 fear,
 Her fingers he pressed hard, as one came
 near
 With curled gray beard, sharp eyes, and
 smooth bald crown,
 Slow-stepped, and robed in philosophic
 gown: 365
 Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
 Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
 While hurried Lamia trembled. "Ah,"
 said he,

"Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
 Why does your tender palm dissolve in
 dew?" — 370

"I'm wearied," said fair Lamia: "tell me
 who

Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
 His features: Lycius! wherefore did you
 blind

Yourself from his quick eyes?" Lycius
 replied,

" 'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide 375
 And good instructor; but tonight he
 seems

The ghost of folly haunting my sweet
 dreams."

While yet he spake they had arrived
 before

A pillared porch, with lofty portal door,

Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor
 glow 380

Reflected in the slabbèd steps below,
 Mild as a star in water; for so new
 And so unsullied was the marble hue, —
 So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
 Ran the dark veins, — that none but feet
 divine 385

Could e'er have touched there. Sounds
 Æolian

Breathed from the hinges, as the ample
 span

Of the wide doors disclosed a place un-
 known

Some time to any, but those two alone,
 And a few Persian mutes, who that same
 year 390

Were seen about the markets. None knew
 where

They could inhabit; the most curious
 Were foiled, who watched to trace them
 to their house:

And but the flitter-wingèd verse must tell,
 For truth's sake, what woe afterwards
 befell, 395

'Twould humor many a heart to leave
 them thus,

Shut from the busy world of more in-
 credulous.

PART SECOND

Love in a hut, with water and a crust,
 Is — Love, forgive us! — cinders, ashes,
 dust:

Love in a palace is perhaps at last
 More grievous torment than a hermit's
 fast —

That is a doubtful tale from faery land, 5
 Hard for the non-elect to understand.

Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,
 He might have given the moral a fresh
 frown,

Or clenched it quite: but too short was
 their bliss

To breed distrust and hate, that make the
 soft voice hiss. 10

Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
 Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,

Hovered and buzzed his wings, with fearful roar,
Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor. 15

For all this came a ruin:—side by side
They were enthronèd, in the eventide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear 20
Unveiled the summer heaven, blue and clear,

Betwixt two marble shafts; there they reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,

Saving a tithe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they almost slept — 25

When from the slope side of a suburb hill,

Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill

Of trumpets — Lycius started: the sounds fled,

But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.
For the first time, since first he harbored in 30

That purple-linèd palace of sweet sin,
His spirit passed beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.

The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want 35
Of something more, more than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well

That but a moment's thought is passion's passing-bell.

"Why do you sigh, fair creature?" whispered he. — 40

"Why do you think?" returned she tenderly;

"You have deserted me: where am I now?
Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:

No, no, you have dismissed me; and I go

From your breast houseless: ay, it must be so." 45

He answered, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirrored small in paradise:
"My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,

While I am striving how to fill my heart 50
With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
How to entangle, trammel up and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,

Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
Ay, a sweet kiss — you see your mighty woes. 55

My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!

What mortal hath a prize that other men
May be confounded and abashed withal,
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,

And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice 60
Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.

Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,

While through the throngèd streets your bridal car

Wheels round its dazzling spokes." — The lady's cheek

Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek, 65

Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,

To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,

Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim 70
Her wild and timid nature to his aim;
Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue 75
Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.

Fine was the mitigated fury, like
Apollo's presence when in act to strike

The serpent — Ha, the serpent! certes,
 she 80
 Was none. She burnt, she loved the
 tyranny,
 And, all subdued, consented to the hour
 When to the bridal he should lead his
 paramour.

Whispering in midnight silence, said the
 youth:

"Sure some sweet name thou hast, though,
 by my truth, 85

I have not asked it, ever thinking thee
 Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
 As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
 Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
 Or friends or kinsfolk on the citted earth,
 To share our marriage feast and nuptial
 mirth?" — 91

"I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not
 one;

My presence in wide Corinth hardly
 known.

My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
 Sepulchred, where no kindled incense
 burns, 95

Seeing all their luckless race are dead,
 save me,

And I neglect the holy rite for thee.

Even as you list invite your many guests;

But if, as now it seems, your vision rests

With any pleasure on me, do not bid 100

Old Apollonius — from him keep me hid."

Lycius, perplexed at words so blind and
 blank,

Made close inquiry; from whose touch she
 shrank,

Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade

Of deep sleep in a moment was be-
 trayed. 105

It was the custom then to bring away
 The bride from home at blushing shut of
 day,

Veiled, in a chariot, heralded along

By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage
 song,

With other pageants: but this fair un-
 known 110

Had not a friend. So being left alone
 (Lycius was gone to summon all his kin),
 And knowing surely she could never win
 His foolish heart from its mad pompous-
 ness,

She set herself, high-thoughted, how to
 dress 115

The misery in fit magnificence.
 She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and
 whence

Came, and who were, her subtle servitors.
 About the halls, and to and from the
 doors,

There was a noise of wings, till in short
 space 120

The glowing banquet-room shone with
 wide-arched grace.

A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
 Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
 Throughout, as fearful the whole charm
 might fade.

Fresh-carved cedar, mimicking a glade 125
 Of palm and plantain, met from either
 side,

High in the midst, in honor of the bride:
 Two palms and then two plantains, and
 so on,

From either side their stems branched one
 to one

All down the aisled place; and beneath
 all 130

There ran a stream of lamps straight on
 from wall to wall.

So canopied, lay an untasted feast

Teeming with odors. Lamia, regal drest,

Silently paced about, and as she went,

In pale contented sort of discontent, 135

Missioned her viewless servants to en-
 rich

The fretted splendor of each nook and
 niche.

Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at
 first,

Came jasper panels; then, anon, there
 burst

Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees, 140

And with the larger wove in small in-
 tricacies.

Approving all, she faded at self-will,

And shut the chamber up, close, hushed
and still,
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil
her solitude. 145

The day appeared, and all the gossip
rout.

O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore
flout

The silent-blessing fate, warm cloistered
hours,

And show to common eyes these secret
bowers?

The herd approached. Each guest, with
busy brain, 150

Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
And entered marvelling: for they knew

the street,
Remembered it from childhood all com-
plete

Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair de-
mesne. 155

So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and
keen:

Save one, who looked thereon with eye
severe,

And with calm-planted steps walked in
austere:

'Twas Apollonius. Something too he
laughed,

As though some knotty problem, that had
daft 160

His patient thought, had now begun to
thaw,

And solve and melt:—'twas just as he
foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vesti-
bule

His young disciple. "'Tis no common
rule,

Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest 165
To force himself upon you, and infest

With an unbidden presence the bright
throng

Of younger friends; yet must I do this
wrong,

And you forgive me." Lycius blushed,
and led

The old man through the inner doors
broad-spread; 170

With reconciling words and courteous
mien

Turning into sweet milk the sophist's
spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-
room,

Filled with pervading brilliance and per-
fume.

Before each lucid panel fuming stood 175
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,

Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the

soft
Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of

smoke 179
From fifty censers their light voyage took

To the high roof, still mimicked as they
rose

Along the mirrored walls by twin-clouds
odorous.

Twelve spherèd tables, by silk seats in-
spherèd,

High as the level of a man's breast reared
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy

gold 185
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice

told
Of Ceres' horn; and, in huge vessels, wine

Came from the gloomy tun with merry
shine.

Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a

god. 190

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure

pressed,
By ministering slaves, upon his hands and

feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet

Poured on his hair, they all moved to the
feast 195

In white robes; and themselves in order
placed

Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of
wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a voweled under-
song 200

Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow;
But when the happy vintage touched their
brains,

Louder they talk, and louder come the
strains

Of powerful instruments. The gorgeous
dyes, 205

The space, the splendor of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous
cheer,

Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy
deed,

And every soul from human trammels
freed, 210

No more so strange; for merry wine, sweet
wine,

Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too
divine.

Soon was God Bacchus at meridian
height;

Flushed were their cheeks, and bright eyes
double bright.

Garlands of every green and every
scent, 215

From vales deflowered, or forest-trees
branch-rent,

In baskets of bright osiered gold were
brought

High as the handles heaped, to suit the
thought

Of every guest; that each, as he did
please,

Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillowed at
his ease. 220

What wreath for Lamia? What for
Lycius?

What for the sage, old Apollonius?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung

The leaves of willow and of adder's
tongue;

And for the youth, quick, let us strip for
him 225

The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may
swim

Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle
wage

War on his temples. Do not all charms
fly

At the mere touch of cold philosophy? 230
There was an awful rainbow once in
heaven:

We know her woof, her texture; she is
given

In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an angel's wings,

Conquer all mysteries by rule and line, 235
Empty the haunted air, and gnomèd
mine—

Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-personed Lamia melt into a
shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief
place,

Scarce saw in all the room another face; 240
Till, checking his love-trance, a cup he
took

Full brimmed, and opposite sent forth a
look

'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled counte-
nance,

And pledge him. The bald-head philoso-
pher 245

Had fixed his eye, without a twinkle or
stir,

Full on the alarmèd beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling
her sweet pride.

Lycius then pressed her hand, with devout
touch,

As pale it lay upon the rosy couch: 250
'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his
veins;

Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains

Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
 "Lamia, what means this? Wherefore
 dost thou start?

Know'st thou that man?" Poor Lamia
 answered not. 255

He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot
 Owned they the lovelorn piteous appeal.
 More, more he gazed; his human senses
 reel:

Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs:
 There was no recognition in those orbs. 260
 "Lamia!" he cried—and no soft-toned
 reply.

The many heard, and the loud revelry
 Grew hush. The stately music no more
 breathes;

The myrtle sickened in a thousand
 wreaths.

By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure
 ceased: 265

A deadly silence step by step increased,
 Until it seemed a horrid presence there,
 And not a man but felt the terror in his
 hair.

"Lamia!" he shrieked; and nothing but
 the shriek

With its sad echo did the silence break. 270
 "Begone, foul dream!" he cried, gazing
 again

In the bride's face, where now no azure
 vein

Wandered on fair-spaced temples; no soft
 bloom

Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine
 The deep-recessed vision:—all was
 blight; 275

Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly
 white.

"Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruth-
 less man!

Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous
 ban

Of all the gods, whose dreadful images
 Here represent their shadowy presences,
 May pierce them on the sudden with the
 thorn 281

Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn.

In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
 Of conscience, for their long-offended
 might

For all thine impious proud-heart sophis-
 tries, 285

Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
 Corinthians! look upon that graybeard
 wretch!

Mark how, possessed, his lashless eyelids
 stretch

Around his demon eyes! Corinthians,
 see!

My sweet bride withers at their potency."

"Fool!" said the sophist, in an under-
 tone 291

Gruff with contempt; which a death-nigh-
 ting moan

From Lycius answered, as heart-struck
 and lost

He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
 "Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes
 still 295

Relented not, nor moved; "from every ill
 Of life have I preserved thee to this day,
 And shall I see thee made a serpent's
 prey?"

Then Lamia breathed death-breath; the
 sophist's eye,

Like a sharp spear, went through her
 utterly, 300

Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging. She, as
 well

As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motioned him to be silent—vainly so:

He looked, and looked again, a level No!
 "A serpent!" echoed he—no sooner said
 Than with a frightful scream she van-
 ished: 306

And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
 As were his limbs of life, from that same
 night.

On the high couch he lay!—his friends
 came round—

Supported him—no pulse or breath they
 found, 310

And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body
 wound.

BRIGHT STAR! WOULD I WERE
STEADFAST AS THOU ART

(1820)

Bright star! would I were steadfast as
thou art —

Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike
task 5

Of pure ablution round earth's human
shores,

Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the
moors —

No: yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening
breast, 10

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken
breath,

And so live ever — or else swoon to death.

BLANCO WHITE

(1775-1841)

NIGHT AND DEATH

(1828)

Mysterious Night! when our first parent
knew

Thee from report divine, and heard thy
name,

Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?

But through a curtain of translucent
dew, 5

Bathed in the rays of the great setting
flame,

Hesperus with the host of heaven came, —
And lo! creation widened in man's view.

Who could have thought such darkness lay
concealed

Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could
find, 10

Whilst bud and flower and insect stood
revealed,

That to such countless worlds that mad'st
us blind!

Why do we then shun death with anxious
strife —

If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not
Life?

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

(1796-1849)

WHITHER IS GONE THE
WISDOM

(From Miscellaneous Sonnets, number
VIII, 1833)

Whither is gone the wisdom and the power
That ancient sages scattered with the notes
Of thought-suggesting lyres? The music
floats

In the void air; e'en at this breathing hour,
In every cell and every blooming bower 5
The sweetness of old lays is hovering still:
But the strong soul, the self-constraining
will,

The rugged root which bare the winsome
flower,

Is weak and withered. Were we like the
fays

That sweetly nestle in the foxglove bells, 10
Or lurk and murmur in the rose-lipped
shells

Which Neptune to the earth for quit-rent
pays,

Then might our pretty modern philomels
Sustain our spirits with their roundelays.

THOMAS HOOD

(1799-1845)

RUTH

(1827)

She stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripened — such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veiled a light
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim —
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks.

Sure, I said, heaven did not mean
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean:
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.

FAREWELL, LIFE!

(1845)

Farewell, life! my senses swim;
And the world is growing dim:
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night; —
Colder, colder, colder still,
Upward steals a vapor chill,
Strong the earthy odor grows —
I smell the mould above the rose!

Welcome, life! the spirit strives!
Strength returns, and hope revives:
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn;
O'er the earth there comes a bloom,
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapor cold —
I smell the rose above the mould!

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

(1843)

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread —

Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the Song of the Shirt: —

“Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

“Work—work—work,
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work,
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam, —
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

“Oh, men, with sisters dear!
Oh, men, with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A shroud as well as a shirt.

“But why do I talk of Death?
That phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear its terrible shape,
It seems so like my own —
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep:
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

“Work—work—work!
My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread, and rags:
That shattered roof — this naked floor —
A table — a broken chair —
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

"Work—work—work!
 From weary chime to chime; 50
 Work—work—work,
 As prisoners work for crime!
 Band, and gusset, and seam,
 Seam, and gusset, and band,
 Till the heart is sick, and the brain be-
 numbed, 55
 As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,
 In the dull December light;
 And work—work—work,
 When the weather is warm and
 bright, — 60
 While underneath the eaves
 The brooding swallows cling,
 As if to show me their sunny backs
 And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath 65
 Of the cowslip and primrose sweet, —
 With the sky above my head,
 And the grass beneath my feet:
 For only one short hour
 To feel as I used to feel, 70
 Before I knew the woes of want
 And the walk that costs a meal.

"Oh! but for one short hour!
 A respite however brief, —
 No blessed leisure for love or hope, 75
 But only time for grief!
 A little weeping would ease my heart,
 But in their briny bed
 My tears must stop, for every drop
 Hinders needle and thread! — 80

"Seam, and gusset, and band,
 Band, and gusset, and seam,
 Work, work, work,
 Like the engine that works by steam!
 A mere machine of iron and wood 85
 That toils for Mammon's sake —
 Without a brain to ponder and craze,
 Or a heart to feel — and break!"

With fingers weary and worn,
 With eyelids heavy and red, 90
 A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
 Plying her needle and thread —
 Stitch! stitch! stitch!
 In poverty, hunger and dirt, 94
 And still with a voice of dolorous pitch —
 Would that its tone could reach the
 rich! —
 She sang this Song of the Shirt!

W. M. PRAED
 (1802-1839)

THE VICAR
 (1829)

Some years ago, ere time and taste
 Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
 When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,
 And roads as little known as scurvy,
 The man who lost his way, between 5
 St. Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket,
 Was always shown across the green,
 And guided to the Parson's wicket.

Back flew the bolt of lissom lath;
 Fair Margaret, in her tidy kirtle, 10
 Led the lorn traveller up the path,
 Through clean-clipt rows of box and
 myrtle;
 And Don and Sancho, Tramp and Tray,
 Upon the parlor steps collected, 14
 Wagged all their tails, and seemed to
 say,
 "Our master knows you—you're ex-
 pected."

Uprose the Reverend Dr. Brown,
 Uprose the Doctor's winsome marrow;
 The lady laid her knitting down,
 Her husband clasped his ponderous
 Barrow. 20
 Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
 Pundit or Papist, saint or sinner,
 He found a stable for his steed,
 And welcome for himself, and dinner.

If, when he reached his journey's end, 25
 And warmed himself in court or college,
 He had not gained an honest friend
 And twenty curious scraps of knowl-
 edge, —
 If he departed as he came,
 With no new light on love or liquor, —30
 Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,
 And not the Vicarage, nor the Vicar.

His talk was like a stream, which runs
 With rapid change from rocks to roses:
 It slipped from politics to puns, 35
 It passed from Mahomet to Moses;
 Beginning with the laws which keep
 The planets in their radiant courses,
 And ending with some precept deep
 For dressing eels, or shoeing horses. 40

He was a shrewd and sound divine,
 Of loud Dissent the mortal terror;
 And when, by dint of page and line,
 He 'stablished Truth, or startled Error,
 The Baptist found him far too deep; 45
 The Deist sighed with saving sorrow;
 And the lean Levite went to sleep
 And dreamed of tasting pork tomorrow.

His sermon never said or showed
 That Earth is foul, that Heaven is
 gracious, 50
 Without refreshment on the road
 From Jerome, or from Athanasius;
 And sure a righteous zeal inspired
 The hand and head that penned and
 planned them,
 For all who understood, admired 55
 And some who did not understand them.

He wrote, too, in a quiet way,
 Small treatises, and smaller verses;
 And sage remarks on chalk and clay,
 And hints to noble lords — and nurses; 60
 True histories of last year's ghost,
 Lines to a ringlet, or a turban;
 And trifles for the Morning Post,
 And nothings for Sylvanus Urban.

He did not think all mischief fair, 65
 Although he had a knack of joking;
 He did not make himself a bear,
 Although he had a taste for smoking;
 And when religious sects ran mad,
 He held, in spite of all his learning, 70
 That if a man's belief is bad,
 It will not be improved by burning.

And he was kind, and loved to sit
 In the low hut or garnished cottage,
 And praise the farmer's homely wit, 75
 And share the widow's homelier pottage.
 At his approach complaint grew mild;
 And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
 The clammy lips of Fever smiled
 The welcome which they could not utter.

He always had a tale for me 81
 Of Julius Cæsar, or of Venus;
 From him I learnt the rule of three,
 Cat's-cradle, leapfrog, and *Quæ genus*.
 I used to singe his powdered wig, 85
 To steal the staff he put such trust in,
 And make the puppy dance a jig
 When he began to quote Augustine.

Alack the change! In vain I look
 For haunts in which my boyhood
 trifled, — 90
 The level lawn, the trickling brook,
 The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled.
 The church is larger than before;
 You reach it by a carriage entry;
 It holds three hundred people more, 95
 And pews are fitted up for gentry.

Sit in the Vicar's seat: you'll hear
 The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
 Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,
 Whose phrase is very Ciceronian. — 100
 Where is the old man laid? Look down,
 And construe, on the slab before you,
 "*Hic jacet GVLIELMVS BROWN,*
Vir nullâ non donandus lauru."

R. S. HAWKER

(1803-1875)

MAWGAN OF MELHUACH

(1832)

'Twas a fierce night when old Mawgan
died:

Men shuddered to hear the rolling tide;
The wreckers fled fast from the awful
shore —

They had heard strange voices amid the
roar.

"Out with the boat, there," some one
cried; 5

"Will he never come? we shall lose the
tide;

His berth is trim and his cabin stored:
He's a weary long time coming on board."

The old man struggled upon the bed:
He knew the words that the voices said; 10
Wildly he shrieked as his eyes grew dim,
"He was dead! he was dead! when I
buried him."

Hark yet again to the devilish roar:
"He was nimbler once with a ship on
shore;

Come! come! old man, 'tis a vain delay, 15
We must make the offing by break of day."

Hard was the struggle; but at the last,
With a stormy pang, old Mawgan past:
And away, away, beneath their sight,
Gleamed the red sail at pitch of night.

ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTER-
ING SPIRITS?

(1840)

We see them not—we cannot hear
The music of their wing —
Yet know we that they sojourn near,
The Angels of the Spring!

They glide along this lovely ground, 5
When the first violet grows;
Their graceful hands have just unbound
The zone of yonder rose!

I gather it for thy dear breast,
From stain and shadow free: 10
That which an angel's touch hath blest
Is meet, my love, for thee!

WILLIAM BARNES

(1801-1886)

BLACKMWORE MAIDENS

(1844)

The primrose in the sheäde do blow,
The cowlslip in the zun,
The thyme upon the down do grow,
The clote where streams do run:
An' where do pretty maïdens grow 5
An' blow, but where the tow'r
Do rise among the bricken tuns
In Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you could zee their comely gaït,
An' pretty feäces' smiles, 10
A-trippèn on so light o' waïght,
An' steppèn off the stiles, —
A-gwaïn to church, as bells do swing
An' ring 'ithin the tow'r, —
You'd own the pretty maïdens' pleäce 15
Is Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road
To Stower or Paladore,
An' all the farmers' housen show'd
Their daughters at the door, 20
You'd cry to bachelors at hwome:
"Here, come! 'ithin an hour
You'll vind ten maïdens to your mind,
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

An' if you look'd 'ithin their door, 26
To zee em in their pleäce,
A-doèn housework up avore
Their smilèn mother's feäce,
You'd cry: "Why, if a man would wive
An' thrive, 'ithout a dow'r, 30
Then let en look en out a wife
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

As I upon my road did pass
 A schoolhouse back in May,
 There out upon the beaten grass 35
 Were maidens at their play;
 An' as the pretty souls did twell
 An' smile, I cried: "The flow'r
 O' beauty, then, is still in bud
 In Blackmwoe by the Stour." 40

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864)

ROSE AYLMEYER
 (1806)

Ah what avails the sceptered race,
 Ah what the form divine!
 What every virtue, every grace!
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
 Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes 5
 May weep, but never see,
 A night of memories and of sighs
 I consecrate to thee.

PAST RUINED ILION (1831)

Past ruined Ilium Helen lives,
 Alceste rises from the shades:
 Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives
 Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil 5
 Hide all the peopled hills you see,
 The gay, the proud: while lovers hail,
 These many summers, you and me.

YOUR PLEASURES SPRING LIKE DAISIES (1846)

Your pleasures spring like daisies in the
 grass,
 Cut down, and up again as blithe as
 ever:
 From you, Ianthé, little troubles pass
 Like little ripples down a sunny river.

WITH ROSY HAND (1846)

With rosy hand a little girl pressed down
 A boss of fresh-culled cowslips in a rill.
 Often as they sprang up again, a frown
 Showed she disliked resistance to her
 will:
 But when they drooped their heads and
 shone much less, 5
 She shook them to and fro, and threw
 them by,
 And tripped away. "Ye loathe the heavi-
 ness
 Ye love to cause, my little girls!"
 thought I,
 "And what had shone for you, by you
 must die."

THE MAID I LOVE (1846)

The maid I love ne'er thought of me
 Amid the scenes of gaiety;
 But when her heart or mine sank low,
 Ah then it was no longer so.
 From the slant palm she raised her head, 5
 And kissed the cheek whence youth had
 fled.
 Angels! some future day, for this,
 Give her as sweet and pure a kiss.

GIVE ME THE EYES (1846)

Give me the eyes that look on mine,
 And, when they see them dimly shine,
 Are moister than they were.
 Give me the eyes that fain would find
 Some relics of a youthful mind 5
 Amid the wrecks of care.
 Give me the eyes that catch at last
 A few faint glimpses of the past,
 And, like the arkite dove,
 Bring back a long lost olive-bough, 10
 And can discover even now
 A heart that once could love.

TWENTY YEARS HENCE

(1846)

Twenty years hence my eyes may grow
If not quite dim, yet rather so;
Still yours from others they shall know
Twenty years hence.

Twenty years hence, tho' it may hap 5
That I be called to take a nap
In a cool cell where thunder-clap
Was never heard,

There breathe but o'er my arch of grass
A not too sadly sighed *Alas*, 10
And I shall catch, ere you can pass,
That wingèd word.

PROUD WORD YOU NEVER SPOKE

(1846)

Proud word you never spoke, but you will
speak
Four not exempt from pride some
future day.
Resting on one white hand a warm wet
cheek,
Over my open volume, you will say,
"This man loved *me!*" then rise and trip 5
away.

ON THE SMOOTH BROW

(1846)

On the smooth brow and clustering hair,
Myrtle and rose! your wreath combine:
The duller olive I would wear,
Its constancy, its peace, be mine.

ALAS, HOW SOON

(1846)

Alas, how soon the hours are over
Counted us out to play the lover!
And how much narrower is the stage
Allotted us to play the sage!

But when we play the fool, how wide 5
The theatre expands! beside,
How long the audience sits before us!
How many prompters! what a chorus!

WHY, WHY, REPINE

(1846)

Why, why repine, my pensive friend,
At pleasures slipped away?
Some the stern Fates will never lend,
And all refuse to stay.

I see the rainbow in the sky, 5
The dew upon the grass,—
I see them, and I ask not why
They glimmer or they pass.

With folded arms I linger not
To call them back; 'twere vain: 10
In this, or in some other spot,
I know they'll shine again.

YES: I WRITE VERSES

(1846)

Yes: I write verses now and then;
But blunt and flaccid is my pen,
No longer talked of by young men
As rather clever.

In the last quarter are my eyes, 5
You see it by their form and size:
Is it not time then to be wise?
Or now or never!

Fairest that ever sprang from Eve!
While Time allows the short reprieve, 10
Just look at me! would you believe
'Twas once a lover?
I cannot clear the five-bar gate,
But, trying first its timbers' state,
Climb stiffly up, take breath, and wait 15
To trundle over.

Through gallopade I cannot swing
The entangling blooms of Beauty's
spring;
I cannot say the tender thing,
Be't true or false; 20

And am beginning to opine
 Those girls are only half-divine
 Whose waists yon wicked boys entwine
 In giddy waltz.

I fear that arm above that shoulder; 25
 I wish them wiser, graver, older,
 Sedater, and no harm if colder
 And panting less.
 Ah! people were not half so wild
 In former days, when, starchly mild, 30
 Upon her high-heeled Essex smiled
 The brave Queen Bess.

HOW MANY VOICES

(1846)

How many voices gaily sing,
 "O happy morn, O happy spring
 Of life!" Meanwhile there comes o'er
 me
 A softer voice from Memory,
 And says, "If loves and hopes have
 flown 5
 With years, think too what griefs are
 gone!"

TO ROBERT BROWNING

(1846)

There is delight in singing, tho' none hear
 Beside the singer; and there is delight
 In praising, tho' the praiser sit alone
 And see the praised far off him, far
 above.
 Shakespeare is not our poet, but the
 world's, 5
 Therefore on him no speech! And brief
 for thee,
 Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and
 hale,
 No man hath walked along our roads
 with step
 So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
 So varied in discourse. But warmer
 climes 10
 Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the
 breeze

Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne
 on
 Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
 The Siren waits thee, singing song for
 song.

ON "THE HELLENICS"

(1847)

Come back, ye wandering Muses, come
 back home,
 Ye seem to have forgotten where it lies.
 Come, let us walk upon the silent sands
 Of Simois, where deep footmarks show
 long strides;
 Thence we may mount, perhaps, to higher
 ground, 5
 Where Aphrodite from Athenè won
 The golden apple, and from Herè too,
 And happy Ares shouted far below.
 Or would ye rather choose the grassy
 vale
 Where flows Anapos through anemo-
 nes, 10
 Hyacinths, and narcissuses, that bend
 To show their rival beauty in the stream?
 Bring with you each her lyre, and each
 in turn
 Temper a graver with a lighter song.

* THE DEATH OF ARTEMIDORA (From The Hellenics, 1846)

"Artemidora! Gods invisible,
 While thou art lying faint along the
 couch,
 Have tied the sandal to thy slender feet
 And stand beside thee, ready to convey
 Thy weary steps were other rivers flow. 5
 Refreshing shades will waft thy weariness
 ness
 Away, and voices like thy own come near
 And nearer, and solicit an embrace."
 Artemidora sighed, and would have
 pressed
 The hand now pressing hers, but was too
 weak. 10

Iris stood over her dark hair, unseen,
 While thus Elpenor spake. He looked
 into
 Eyes that had given light and life ere-
 while
 To those above them, those now dim with
 tears
 And wakefulness. Again he spake of
 joy 15
 Eternal. At that word, that sad word
 joy,
 Faithful and fond her bosom heaved once
 more:
 Her head fell back; and now a loud deep
 sob
 Swelled through the darkened chamber;
 'twas not hers.



IPHIGENEIA AND AGAMEMNON

(From The Hellenics, 1846)

Iphigeneia, when she heard her doom
 At Aulis, and when all beside the King
 Had gone away, took his right hand, and
 said,
 "O father! I am young and very happy.
 I do not think the pious Calchas heard 5
 Distinctly what the Goddess spake. Old-
 age
 Obscures the senses. If my nurse, who
 knew
 My voice so well, sometimes misunder-
 stood
 While I was resting on her knee both
 arms
 And hitting it to make her mind my
 words, 10
 And looking in her face, and she in
 mine,
 Might he not also hear one word amiss,
 Spoken from so far off, even from Olym-
 pus?"
 The father placed his cheek upon her
 head,
 And tears dropped down it, but the king
 of men 15
 Replied not. Then the maiden spake once
 more.

"O father! sayst thou nothing? Hear'st
 thou not
 Me, whom thou ever hast, until this hour,
 Listened to fondly, and awakened me
 To hear my voice amid the voice of
 birds, — 20
 When it was inarticulate as theirs,
 And the down deadened it within the
 nest?"
 He moved her gently from him, silent
 still,
 And this, and this alone, brought tears
 from her,
 Although she saw fate nearer. Then with
 sighs: 25
 "I thought to have laid down my hair
 before
 Benignant Artemis, and not have dimmed
 Her polished altar with my virgin blood;
 I thought to have selected the white
 flowers
 To please the nymphs, and to have asked
 of each 30
 By name, and with no sorrowful regret,
 Whether, since both my parents willed
 the change,
 I might at Hymen's feet bend my clipped
 brow;
 And (after those who mind us girls the
 most)
 Adore our own Athena, that she would 35
 Regard me mildly with her azure eyes.
 But father! to see you no more, and see
 Your love, O father! go ere I am
 gone —"

Gently he moved her off, and drew her
 back,
 Bending his lofty head far over hers, 40
 And the dark depths of nature heaved
 and burst.
 He turned away; not far, but silent still.
 She now first shuddered; for in him, so
 nigh,
 So long a silence seemed the approach of
 death,
 And like it. Once again she raised her
 voice: 45
 "O father! if the ships are now detained,

And all your vows move not the gods
 above,
 When the knife strikes me there will be
 one prayer
 The less to them; and purer can there be
 Any, or more fervent than the daughter's
 prayer 50
 For her dear father's safety and success?"
 A groan that shook him shook not his
 resolve.
 An aged man now entered, and without
 One word, stepped slowly on, and took
 the wrist
 Of the pale maiden. She looked up and
 saw 55
 The fillet of the priest and calm cold eyes.
 Then turned she where her parent stood,
 and cried,
 "O father! grieve no more: the ships can
 sail."

THE HAMADRYAD (*From The Hellenics, 1846*)

Rhaicos was born amid the hills where-
 from
 Gnidus, the light of Caria, is discerned:
 And small are the white-crested that play
 near,
 And smaller onward are the purple waves.
 Thence festal choirs were visible, all
 crowned 5
 With rose and myrtle if they were inborn;
 If from Pandion sprang they, on the coast
 Where stern Athenè raised her citadel,
 Then olive was intertwined with violets
 Clustered in bosses, regular and large. 10
 For various men wore various coronals;
 But one was their devotion. 'Twas to
 her
 Whose laws all follow, her whose smile
 withdraws
 The sword from Ares, thunderbolt from
 Zeus;
 And whom in his chill caves the mutable 15
 Of mind, Poseidon, the sea-king, reverts;
 And whom his brother, stubborn Dis, hath
 prayed

To turn in pity the averted cheek
 Of her he bore away, with promises, —
 Nay, with loud oath before dread Styx
 itself, — 20
 To give her daily more and sweeter
 flowers
 Than he made drop from her on Enna's
 dell.

Rhaicos was looking from his father's
 door
 At the long trains that hastened to the
 town
 From all the valleys, like bright rivu-
 lets 25
 Gurgling with gladness, wave outrunning
 wave;
 And thought it hard he might not also go
 And offer up one prayer, and press one
 hand,
 He knew not whose. The father called
 him in,
 And said, "Son Rhaicos! those are idle
 games; 30
 Long enough I have lived to find them
 so."
 And ere he ended sighed; as old men do
 Always, to think how idle such games
 are.
 "I have not yet," thought Rhaicos in his
 heart,
 And wanted proof. — "Suppose thou go
 and help 35
 Echeion at the hill, to bark yon oak
 And lop its branches off, before we delve
 About the trunk and ply the root with
 axe:
 This we may do in winter." — Rhaicos
 went;
 For thence he could see farther, and see
 more 40
 Of those who hurried to the city-gate.
 Echeion he found there, with naked arm
 Swart-haired, strong-sinewed, and his eyes
 intent
 Upon the place where first the axe should
 fall:
 He held it upright. "There are bees
 about, 45

Or wasps, or hornets," said the cautious
eld;
"Look sharp, O son of Thallinos!" The
youth
Inclined his ear, afar, and warily,
And cavered in his hand. He heard a
buzz
At first,—and then the sound grew soft
and clear, 50.
And then divided into what seemed tune,
And there were words upon it, plaintive
words.
He turned, and said, "Echeion! do not
strike
That tree: it must be hollow; for some
god
Speaks from within. Come thyself near."
Again 55
Both turned toward it: and behold! there
sat
Upon the moss below, with her two palms
Pressing it, on each side, a maid in form.
Downcast were her long eyelashes, and
pale
Her cheek; but never mountain-ash dis-
played 60
Berries of color like her lip so pure;
Nor were the anemones about her hair
Soft, smooth, and wavering like the face
beneath.
"What dost thou here?" Echeion, half-
afraid,
Half-angry, cried. She lifted up her
eyes, 65
But nothing spake she. Rhaicos drew one
step
Backward, for fear came likewise over
him,
But not such fear: he panted, gasped,
drew in
His breath, and would have turned it into
words,
But could not into one. "O send away 70
That sad old man!" said she. The old
man went
Without a warning from his master's son,
Glad to escape, for sorely he now feared;
And the axe shone behind him in their
eyes.

Hamad. And wouldst thou, too, shed
the most innocent 75
Of blood? No vow demands it; no god
wills
The oak to bleed.
Rhaicos. Who art thou? whence? why
here?
And whither wouldst thou go? Among
the robed
In white or saffron, or the hue that most
Resembles dawn or the clear sky, is
none 80
Arrayed as thou art. What so beautiful
As that gray robe which clings about thee
close,
Like moss to stones adhering, leaves to
trees,—
Yet lets thy bosom rise and fall in turn,
As, touched by zephyrs, fall and rise the
boughs 85
Of graceful platan by the river-side?
Hamad. Lovest thou well thy father's
house?
Rhaicos. Indeed
I love it, well I love it, yet would leave
For thine, where'er it be, my father's
house,
With all the marks upon the door, that
show 90
My growth at every birthday since the
third;
And all the charms, o'erpowering evil
eyes,
My mother nailed for me against my bed;
And the Cydonian bow (which thou shalt
see)
Won in my race last spring from Euty-
chos. 95
Hamad. Bethink thee what it is to
leave a home
Thou never yet hast left, one night, one
day.
Rhaicos. No, 'tis not hard to leave it:
'tis not hard
To leave, O maiden, that paternal home,
If there be one on earth whom we may
love 100
First, last, for ever; one who says that
she

Will love for ever too. To say which word,

Only to say it, surely is enough —

It shows such kindness — if 'twere possible

We at the moment think she would indeed. 105

Hamad. Who taught thee all this folly at thy age?

Rhaicos. I have seen lovers and have learned to love.

Hamad. But wilt thou spare the tree?

Rhaicos. My father wants
The bark; the tree may hold its place awhile.

Hamad. Awhile! Thy father numbers then my days? 110

Rhaicos. Are there no others where the moss beneath

Is quite as tufty? Who would send thee forth

Or ask thee why thou tarriest? Is thy flock

Anywhere near?

Hamad. I have no flock: I kill

Nothing that breathes, that stirs, that feels the air, 115

The sun, the dew. Why should the beautiful

(And thou art beautiful) disturb the source

Whence springs all beauty? Hast thou never heard

Of hamadryads?

Rhaicos. Heard of them I have:

Tell me some tale about them. May I sit 120

Beside thy feet? Art thou not tired? The herbs

Are very soft; I will not come too nigh; Do but sit there, nor tremble so, nor doubt. —

Stay, stay an instant: let me first explore

If any acorn of last year be left 125

Within it; thy thin robe too ill protects

Thy dainty limbs against the harm one small

Acorn may do. Here's none. — Another day

Trust me; till then, let me sit opposite.

Hamad. I seat me; be thou seated, and content. 130

Rhaicos. O sight for gods! Ye men below! adore

The Aphroditè. *Is* she there below?

Or sits she here before me? as she sate Before the shepherd on those heights that shade

The Hellespont, and brought his kindred woe. 135

Hamad. Reverence the higher powers; nor deem amiss

Of her who pleads to thee, and would repay —

Ask not how much — but very much. Rise not:

No, *Rhaicos*, no! Without the nuptial vow

Love is unholy. Swear to me that none 140

Of mortal maids shall ever taste thy kiss, Then take thou mine: *then* take it, not before!

Rhaicos. Harken, all gods above! O Aphroditè!

O *Herè*! Let my vow be ratified! —

But wilt thou come into my father's house? 145

Hamad. Nay; and of mine I cannot give thee part.

Rhaicos. Where is it?

Hamad. In this oak.

Rhaicos. Ay; now begins The tale of hamadryad: tell it through.

Hamad. Pray of thy father never to cut down

My tree; and promise him, as well thou mayst, 150

That every year he shall receive from me

More honey than will buy him nine fat sheep,

More wax than he will burn to all the gods. —

Why fallest thou upon thy face? Some thorn

May scratch it, rash young man! Rise
up; for shame! 155

Rhaicos. For shame I can not rise. O
pity me!

I dare not sue for love — but do not hate!
Let me once more behold thee — not once
more,

But many days: let me love on — un-
loved!

I aimed too high: on my head the bolt 160
Falls back, and pierces to the very brain.

Hamad. Go — rather go, than make
me say I love.

Rhaicos. If happiness is immortality
(And whence enjoy it else the gods
above?)

I am immortal too: my vow is heard. 165
Hark! on the left — Nay, turn not from
me now,

I claim my kiss.

Hamad. Do men take first, then
claim?

Do thus the seasons run their course with
them?

Her lips were sealed, her head sank on
his breast.

'Tis said that laughs were heard within
the wood: 170

But who should hear them? — and whose
laughs? and why?

Savory was the smell, and long past
noon,

Thallinos! in thy house; for marjoram,
Basil and mint, and thyme and rosemary,
Were sprinkled on the kid's well roasted
length, 175

Awaiting *Rhaicos*. Home he came at last,
Not hungry, but pretending hunger keen,
With head and eyes just o'er the maple
plate.

"Thou seest but badly, coming from the
sun,

Boy *Rhaicos*!" said the father. "That
oak's bark 180

Must have been tough, with little sap be-
tween;

It ought to run: but it and I are old."

Rhaicos, although each morsel of the
bread

Increased by chewing, and the meat grew
cold

And tasteless to his palate, took a
draught 185

Of gold-bright wine, which, thirsty as he
was,

He thought not of until his father filled
The cup, averring water was amiss,
But wine had been at all times poured on
kid,

It was religion. — He thus fortified 190
Said, not quite boldly, and not quite
abashed:

"Father, that oak is Zeus's own; that oak
Year after year will bring thee wealth
from wax

And honey. There is one who fears the
gods

And the gods love . . . that one" (he
blushed, nor said 195

What one) "has promised this, and may do
more.

Thou hast not many moons to wait until
The bees have done their best; if then
there come

Nor wax nor honey, let the tree be
hewn." —

"Zeus hath bestowed on thee a prudent
mind," 200

Said the glad sire; "but look thou often
there,

And gather all the honey thou canst find
In every crevice, over and above

What has been promised: would they
reckon that?"

Rhaicos went daily; but the nymph, as
oft, 205

Invisible. To play at love, she knew, —
Stopping its breathings when it breathes
most soft, —

Is sweeter than to play on any pipe.
She played on his: she fed upon his sighs;
They pleased her when they gently waved
her hair, 210

Cooling the pulses of her purple veins;

And when her absence brought them out,
they pleased.

Even among the fondest of them all,
What mortal or immortal maid is more
Content with giving happiness than
pain? 215

One day he was returning from the wood
Despondently. She pitied him, and said
"Come back!" and twined her fingers in
the hem

Above his shoulder. Then she led his
steps

To a cool rill that ran o'er level sand 220
Through lentisk and through oleander:
there

Bathed she his feet, lifting them on her
lap

When bathed, and drying them in both
her hands.

He dared complain; for those who most
are loved

Most dare it; but not harsh was his
complaint. 225

"O thou inconstant!" said he; "if stern
law

Bind thee,—or will, stronger than stern-
est law,—

O, let me know henceforward when to
hope

The fruit of love that grows for me but
here."

He spake; and plucked it from its pliant
stem. 230

"Impatient Rhaicos! Why thus intercept
The answer I would give? There is a bee
Whom I have fed, a bee who knows my
thoughts

And executes my wishes: I will send
That messenger. If ever thou art
false, 235

Drawn by another, own it not, but drive
My bee away; then shall I know my
fate,

And—for thou must be wretched—weep
at thine.

But often as my heart persuades to lay
Its cares on thine and throb itself to
rest, 240

Expect her with thee, whether it be morn

Or eve, at any time when woods are
safe."

Day after day the Hours beheld them
blessed,

And season after season: years had past,
Blest were they still. He who asserts
that Love 245

Ever is sated of sweet things,—the same
Sweet things he fretted for in earlier
days,—

Never, by Zeus! loved he a hamadryad.

The nights had now grown longer, and
perhaps

The hamadryads find them lone and
dull 250

Among their woods: one did, alas! She
called

Her faithful bee; 'twas when all bees
should sleep,

And all did sleep but hers. She was sent
forth

To bring that light which never wintry
blast

Blows out, nor rain nor snow extin-
guishes,— 255

The light that shines from loving eyes
upon

Eyes that love back, till they can see no
more.

Rhaicos was sitting at his father's
hearth.

Between them stood the table,—not o'er-
spread

With fruits which autumn now profusely
bore, 260

Nor anise cakes, nor odorous wine; but
there

The draft-board was expanded; at which
game

Triumphant sat old Thallinos; the son
Was puzzled, vexed, discomfited, dis-
traught.

A buzz was at his ear: up went his
hand, 265

And it was heard no longer. The poor
bee

Returned (but not until the morn shone
bright),

And found the Hamadryad with her head
Upon her aching wrist; and showed one
wing

Half broken off, the other's meshes
marred, — 270

And there were bruises which no eye
could see

Saving a hamadryad's. At this sight
Down fell the languid brow, both hands
fell down:

A shriek was carried to the ancient hall
Of Thallinos. He heard it not: his
son 275

Heard it, and ran forthwith into the
wood.

No bark was on the tree, no leaf was
green,

The trunk was riven through. From that
day forth

Nor word nor whisper soothed his ear,
nor sound

Even of insect wing. But loud laments 280
The woodmen and the shepherds one long
year

Heard day and night: for Rhaicos would
not quit

The solitary place, but moaned and died.

Hence milk and honey wonder not, O
guest,

To find set duly on the hollow stone. 285

TO YOUTH

(1853)

Where art thou gone, light-ankled Youth?

With wing at either shoulder,
And smile that never left thy mouth
Until the Hours grew colder:

Then somewhat seemed to whisper near 5
That thou and I must part:

I doubted it; I felt no fear,
No weight upon the heart.

If aught befell it, Love was by
And rolled it off again; 10
So, if there ever was a sigh,
'Twas not a sigh of pain.

I may not call thee back; but thou
Returnest when the hand
Of gentle Sleep waves o'er my brow 15
His poppy-crested wand:

Then smiling eyes bend over mine,
Then lips once pressed invite —
But Sleep hath given a silent sign,
And both, alas! take flight. 20

TO AGE

(1853)

Welcome, old friend! These many years
Have we lived door by door:
The Fates have laid aside their shears
Perhaps for some few more.

I was indocile at an age 5
When better boys were taught,
But thou at length hast made me sage,
If I am sage in aught.

Little I know from other men,
Too little they from me, 10
But thou hast pointed well the pen
That writes these lines to thee.

Thanks for expelling Fear and Hope,
One vile, the other vain;
One's scourge, the other's telescope, 15
I shall not see again:

Rather what lies before my feet
My notice shall engage —
He who hath braved Youth's dizzy heat
Dreads not the frost of Age. 20

THOU NEEDST NOT

(1853)

Thou needst not pitch upon my hat,
Thou withered leaf! to show how near
Is now the winter of my year;
Alas! I want no hint of that.

Prythee, ah prythee, get along! 5
 Whisper as gently in the ear
 I once could whisper in, to fear
 No change, but live for dance and song.

THE CHRYSOLITES AND RUBIES (1853)

The chrysolites and rubies Bacchus brings
 To crown the feast where swells the
 broad-veined brow,
 Where maidens blush at what the minstrel
 sings,
 They who have coveted may covet now.

Bring me, in cool alcove, the grape un-
 crushed, 5
 The peach of pulpy cheek and down
 mature, —
 Where every voice (but bird's or child's)
 is hushed,
 And every thought, like the brook nigh,
 runs pure.

DEATH STANDS ABOVE ME (1853)

Death stands above me, whispering low
 I know not what into my ear:
 Of his strange language all I know
 Is, there is not a word of fear.

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTH- DAY (1853)

I strove with none, for none was worth
 my strife;
 Nature I loved, and next to Nature,
 Art;
 I warmed both hands before the fire of
 life, —
 It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

GOD SCATTERS BEAUTY (1853)

God scatters beauty as he scatters flowers
 O'er the wide earth, and tells us all are
 ours.
 A hundred lights in every temple burn,
 And at each shrine I bend my knee in
 turn.

SO THEN, I FEEL NOT DEEPLY! (1853)

So then, I feel not deeply! If I did,
 I should have seized the pen and pierced
 therewith
 The passive world! — And thus thou rea-
 sonest?
 Well hast thou known the lover's, not so
 well
 The poet's heart: while that heart bleeds,
 the hand 5
 Presses it close. Grief must run on and
 pass
 Into near Memory's more quiet shade
 Before it can compose itself in song.
 He who is agonized and turns to show
 His agony to those who sit around, 10
 Seizes the pen in vain. Thought, fancy,
 power,
 Rush back into his bosom; all the strength
 Of genius can not draw them into light
 From under mastering Grief: but Mem-
 ory,
 The Muse's mother, nurses, rears them 15
 up,
 Informs, and keeps them with her all her
 days.

LATELY OUR SONGSTERS LOITERED (1863)

Lately our songsters loitered in green
 lanes,
 Content to catch the ballads of the plains.
 I fancied I had strength enough to climb
 A loftier station at no distant time,
 And might securely from intrusion doze 5

Upon the flowers through which Ilissus
flows:

In those pale olive grounds all voices
cease,

And from afar dust fills the paths of
Greece.

My slumber broken and my doublet torn,
I find the laurel also bears a thorn. 10

THERE ARE WHO SAY

(1863)

There are who say we are but dust:

We may be soon, but are not yet, —

Nor should be while in Love we
trust

And never what he taught forget.

PART TWO: THE MIDDLE NINETEENTH CENTURY

JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL
NEWMAN
(1801-1890)

THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD
(June 16, 1833)

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling
gloom, —

Lead Thou me on;

The night is dark, and I am far from
home, —

Lead Thou me on.

Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see 5
The distant scene — one step enough for
me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on;

I loved to choose and see my path, — but
now

Lead Thou me on. 10

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past
years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it
still

Will lead me on,

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent,
till 15

The night is gone, —

And with the morn those angel faces
smile,

Which I have loved long since, and lost
awhile.

FLOWERS WITHOUT FRUIT
(June 20, 1833)

Prune thou thy words, — the thoughts
control

That o'er thee swell and throng:

They will condense within thy soul,
And change to purpose strong.

But he who lets his feelings run 5

In soft luxurious flow,

Shrinks when hard service must be done,
And faints at every woe.

Faith's meanest deed more favor bears,

Where hearts and wills are weighed, 10
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom their hour and fade.

R. C. TRENCH
(1807-1886)

RETIREMENT

A wretched thing it were, to have our
heart

Like a thronged highway or a populous
street,

Where every idle thought has leave to
meet,

Pause, or pass on, as in an open mart;

Or like a roadside pool, which no nice 5
art

Has guarded that the cattle may not beat
And foul it with a multitude of feet,

Till of the heavens it can give back no
part.

But keep thou thine a holy solitude:
 For He who would walk there, would
 walk alone; 10
 He who would drink there, must be first
 endued
 With single right to call that stream his
 own.
 Keep thou thine heart close fastened, un-
 revealed, —
 A fenced garden and a fountain sealed.

THOMAS WADE

(1805-1875)

THE TRUE MARTYR

The martyr worthiest of the bleeding
 name
 Is he whose life a bloodless part fulfils:
 Whom racks nor tortures tear, nor
 poniard kills,
 Nor heat of bigots' sacrificial flame;
 But whose great soul can to herself pro-
 claim 5
 The fulness of the everlasting ills
 Wherewith all pained Creation writhes
 and thrills, —
 And yet pursue unblenched her solemn
 aim:
 Who works, all knowing work's futility,
 Creates, all conscious of ubiquitous
 death, 10
 And hopes, believes, adores, while Destiny
 Points from Life's steep to all her graves
 beneath, —
 Whose thought 'mid scorching woes is
 found apart,
 Perfect amid the flames, like Cranmer's
 heart.

AUBREY DE VERE

(1814-1902)

SORROW

(1842)

Count each affliction, whether light or
 grave,
 God's messenger sent down to thee; do
 thou

With courtesy receive him: rise and
 bow;
 And, ere his shadow pass thy threshold,
 crave
 Permission first his heavenly feet to
 lave; 5
 Then lay before him all thou hast. Allow
 No cloud of passion to usurp thy brow,
 Or mar thy hospitality; no wave
 Of mortal tumult to obliterate
 The soul's marmoreal calmness. Grief
 should be, 10
 Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate;
 Confirming, cleansing, raising, making
 free;
 Strong to consume small troubles; to
 commend
 Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts
 lasting to the end.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

(1804-1881)

WELLINGTON

(c. 1849)

Not only that thy puissant arm could
 bind
 The tyrant of a world and, conquering
 Fate,
 Enfranchise Europe, do I deem thee great;
 But that in all thy actions I do find
 Exact propriety: no gusts of mind 5
 Fitful and wild, but that continuous state
 Of ordered impulse mariners await
 In some benignant and enriching wind, —
 The breath ordained of Nature. Thy
 calm mien
 Recalls old Rome, as much as thy high
 deed: 10
 Duty thine only idol, and serene
 When all are troubled; in the utmost need
 Prescient; thy country's servant ever seen,
 Yet sovereign of thyself, whate'er may
 speed.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

(1809-1892)

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

(1832, 1842)

PART I

On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And through the field the road runs by

To many-towered Camelot; 5

And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Through the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river

Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers, 15
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
 Slide the heavy barges, trailed 20
 By slow horses; and unhailed
 The shallop flitteth, silken-sailed,

Skimming down to Camelot:

But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand? 25
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30
 From the river winding clearly

Down to towered Camelot;

And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers "Tis the fairy 35
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colors gay.
 She has heard a whisper say
 A curse is on her if she stay 40
 To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott. 45

And moving through a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near,

Winding down to Camelot; 50

There the river eddy whirls,
 And there the surly village-churls,
 And the red cloaks of market-girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, 55
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-haired page in crimson clad,

Goes by to towered Camelot;

And sometimes through the mirror blue 60
 The knights come riding two and two:
 She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights; 65
 For often through the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights

And music, went to Camelot;

Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately wed: 70
 "I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves;
 The sun came dazzling through the 75
 leaves,

And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle-bells rang merrily 85
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung;
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott. 90

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot; 95
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight
glowed; 100
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls, as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river 105
He flashed into the crystal mirror—
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the 110
room:
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side: 115
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complain- 120
ing,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote 125
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse,
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance,—
With a glassy countenance 130
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay:
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott. 135

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right,—
The leaves upon her falling light,—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot; 140
And as the boat-head wound along,
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy, 145
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,—
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide 150
The first house by the water-side,
Singing, in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery, 155
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 160
 And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
 And in the lighted palace near
 Died the sound of royal cheer; 165
 And they crossed themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot.
 But Lancelot mused a little space;
 He said: "She has a lovely face;
 God in his mercy lend her grace, 170
The Lady of Shalott."

THE LOTOS-EATERS

(1832, 1842)

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward
 the land,
 "This mounting wave will roll us shore-
 ward soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land
 In which it seemèd always afternoon.
 All round the coast the languid air did
 swoon, 5
 Breathing like one that hath a weary
 dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the
 moon;
 And, like a downward smoke, the slender
 stream
 Along the cliff to fall, and pause, and fall,
 did seem.

A land of streams! Some, like a down-
 ward smoke, 10
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did
 go;
 And some through wavering lights and
 shadows broke,
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
 They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
 From the inner land; far off, three moun-
 tain-tops, 15
 Three silent pinnacles of agèd snow,
 Stood sunset-flushed; and, dewed with
 showery drops,
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the
 woven copse.

The charmèd sunset lingered low adown
 In the red west: through mountain clefts
 the dale 20
 Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
 Bordered with palm, and many a winding
 vale
 And meadow, set with slender galingale;
 A land where all things always seemed the
 same!
 And round about the keel with faces
 pale, — 25
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame, —
 The mild-eyed, melancholy Lotos-eaters
 came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted
 stem,
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they
 gave
 To each: but whoso did receive of
 them 30
 And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
 Far, far away did seem to mourn and
 rave
 On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
 His voice was thin, as voices from the
 grave; 34
 And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
 And music in his ears his beating heart did
 make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the
 shore:
 And sweet it was to dream of fatherland,
 Of child, and wife, and slave; but ever-
 more 40
 Most weary seemed the sea, weary the
 oar,
 Weary the wandering fields of barren
 foam.
 Then some one said, "We will return no
 more;"
 And all at once they sang, "Our island
 home
 Is far beyond the wave: we will no longer
 roam." 45

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer
falls
Than petals from blown roses on the
grass;
Or night-dews on still waters between
walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass:
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from
the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers
weep, 55
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs
in sleep.

II

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from
weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil
alone, — 60
We only toil, who are the first of
things, —
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings, 65
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy
balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!" —
Why should we only toil, the roof and
crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood, 70
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no
care, —
Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow 75

Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days 80
The flower ripens in its place, —
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no
toil, —
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 85
Death is the end of life: ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last? 90
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave? 95
All things have rest, and ripen toward the
grave
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long rest or death, — dark death,
or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward
stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem 100
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber
light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on
the height;
To hear each other's whispered speech;
Eating the lotos day by day, 105
To watch the crisping ripples on the
beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melan-
choly;
To muse and brood and live again in mem-
ory, 110

With those old faces of our infancy
 Heaped over with a mound of grass, —
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn
 of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our
 wives 115

And their warm tears. But all hath suffered
 change;

For surely now our household hearths are
 cold, —

Our sons inherit us, our looks are
 strange,

And we should come like ghosts to trouble
 joy.

Or else the island princes, overbold, 120
 Have eat our substance; and the minstrel
 sings

Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten
 things.

Is there confusion in the little isle?
 Let what is broken so remain. 125

The gods are hard to reconcile;
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.

There *is* confusion worse than death, —
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain, —

Long labor unto aged breath, 130
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many
 wars,

And eyes grown dim with gazing on the
 pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
 How sweet, — while warm airs lull us,
 blowing lowly, —

With half-dropt eyelid still, 135
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,

To watch the long, bright river drawing
 slowly

His waters from the purple hill;
 To hear the dewy echoes calling

From cave to cave through the thick-
 twined vine; 140

To watch the emerald-colored water fall-
 ing

Through many a woven acanthus-wreath
 divine!

Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling
 brine —

Only to hear were sweet, stretched out
 beneath the pine.

VIII

The lotos blooms below the barren
 peak; 145

The lotos blows by every winding creek;
 All day the wind breathes low with mel-
 lower tone:

Through every hollow cave and alley lone,
 Round and round the spicy downs, the
 yellow lotos-dust is blown,

We have had enough of action, and of
 motion we, 150

Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard,
 when the surge was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his
 foam-fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an
 equal mind,

In the hollow Lotos-land to live, and lie
 reclined

On the hills like gods together, careless of
 mankind. 155

For they lie beside their nectar, and the
 bolts are hurled

Far below them in the valleys, and the
 clouds are lightly curled

Round their golden houses, girdled with
 the gleaming world;

Where they smile in secret, looking over
 wasted lands,

Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
 roaring deeps and fiery sands, 160

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and
 sinking ships, and praying hands.

But they smile: they find a music centred
 in a doleful song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient
 tale of wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning though the
 words are strong;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that
 cleave the soil, 165

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with
 enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and
 wine, and oil;
 Till they perish and they suffer — some,
 'tis whispered, down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, — others in Elysian
 valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of
 asphodel. 170
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than
 toil, — the shore
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind
 and wave and oar:
 O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not
 wander more.

CENONE

(1832, 1842)

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
 The swimming vapor slopes athwart the
 glen,
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine
 to pine,
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either
 hand 5
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway
 down
 Hang rich in flowers; and far below them
 roars
 The long brook falling through the cloven
 ravine
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus 10
 Stands up and takes the morning; but in
 front
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
 Troas, and Ilion's columned citadel,
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
 Mournful Cēnone, wandering forlorn 15
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round
 her neck
 Floated her hair, or seemed to float in
 rest.

She, leaning on a fragment twined with
 vine,
 Sang to the stillness till the mountain-
 shade 20
 Sloped downward to her seat from the
 upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass; 25
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
 Rests like a shadow; and the winds are
 dead.
 The purple flower droops; the golden bee
 Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of
 love, — 30
 My heart is breaking and my eyes are
 dim, —
 And I am all weary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Hear me, O earth; hear me, O hills, O
 caves 35
 That house the cold-crowned snake! O
 mountain-brooks,
 I am the daughter of a river-god:
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed, 40
 A cloud that gathered shape; for it may be
 That, while I speak of it, a little while
 My heart may wander from its deeper
 woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 45
 I waited underneath the dawning hills:
 Aloft, the mountain-lawn was dewy-dark.
 And dewy-dark aloft the mountain-pine.
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris, 50
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horned,
 white-hooved, came up from reedy Simoïs all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Far off, the torrent called me from the
 cleft;

Far up, the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-
 dropt eyes 55
 I sat alone: White-breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn, he moved; a leopard-
 skin
 Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny
 hair
 Clustered about his temples like a god's;
 And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow
 brightens 60
 When the wind blows the foam: and all
 my heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he
 came.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 He smiled; and opening out his milk-white
 palm,
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian
 gold, 65
 That smelt ambrosially; and while I
 looked
 And listened, the full-flowing river of
 speech
 Came down upon my heart:

'My own CEnone,
 Beautiful-browed CEnone, my own soul,
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind
 ingraven 70
 "For the most fair" would seem to award
 it thine,
 As lovelier than whatever ore-dread haunt
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
 Of movement, and the charm of married
 brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 75
 He pressed the blossom of his lips to mine,
 And added: 'This was cast upon the
 board,
 When all the full-faced presence of the
 gods
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
 Rose feud, with question unto whom
 'twere due. 80
 But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve, —
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice
 Elected-umpire, Herè comes today,

Pallas, and Aphroditè, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the
 cave 85
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld; un-
 heard,
 Hear all; and see thy Paris judge of gods."

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnoon; one silvery
 cloud 90
 Had lost his way between the piny sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they
 came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-
 swarded bower:
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel, 95
 Lotos, and lilies; and a wind arose, —
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower through
 and through. 100

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and
 leaned
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her to
 whom 105
 Coming through heaven, like a light that
 grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the
 gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestioned, — overflowing revenue 110
 Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many
 a vale,
 And river-sundered champaign clothed
 with corn,
 Or labored mine undrainable of ore.
 Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and
 toll,
 From many an inland town, and haven
 large, 115

Mast-thronged beneath her shadowing
citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on, and still she spake of
power,

'Which in all action is the end of all; 120
Power fitted to the season, wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom; from all neighbor
crowns

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon
from me,

From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee
king-born, — 125

A shepherd all thy life but yet kingborn, —
Should come most welcome; seeing men, in
power

Only, are likest gods, who have attained
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss 130
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought
of power

Flattered his spirit. But Pallas, where she
stood 135

Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed
spear

Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold, —
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry
cheek 140

Kept watch, waiting decision, — made re-
ply:

'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-con-
trol,

These three alone lead life to sovereign
power.

Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncalled for) but to live by
law, 145

Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-
quence.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with
gifts. 150

Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed, —
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of
fair, 155

Unbiased by self-profit, — O, rest thee
sure

That I shall love thee well and cleave to
thee:

So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses like a god's,
To push thee forward through a life of
shocks, 160

Dangers, and deeds; until endurance grow
Sinewed with action, — and the full-grown
will,

Circled through all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceased,
And Paris pondered; and I cried, 'O
Paris, 165

Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful, 170
Fresh as the foam, — new-bathed in
Paphian wells, —

With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep
hair

Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder. From the violets her light
foot 175

Shone rosy-white; and o'er her rounded
form

Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she
moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes, 180
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh

Half-whispered in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in
Greece.'

She spoke and laughed: I shut my sight
for fear.

But when I looked, Paris had raised his
arm; 185

And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud;
And I was left alone within the bower.
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die. 190

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand
times.

Methinks I must be fair, for yester-
day, 194

When I past by, a wild and wanton
pard,

Eyed like the evening-star, with playful
tail

Crouched fawning in the weed. Most
loving is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my
arms

Were wound about thee, and my hot lips
prest

Close, close to thine in that quick-falling
dew 200

Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simoïs!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest
pines, —

My tall dark pines, — that plumed the
craggy ledge 205

High over the blue gorge and, all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract,
Fostered the callow eaglet — from be-
neath

Whose thick mysterious boughs in the
dark morn

The panther's roar came muffled, while I
sat 210

Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone CEnone see the morning mist

Sweep through them; never see them over-
laid

With narrow moonlit slips of silver
cloud,

Between the loud stream and the trem-
bling stars. 215

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the
glens,

Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable, that uninvited came 220

Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak
my mind,

And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of gods and
men. 225

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand
times,

In this green valley, under this green hill,
Even on this hand, and sitting on this
stone?

Sealed it with kisses? watered it with
tears? 230

O happy tears, and how unlike to these!

O happy heaven, how canst thou see my
face?

O happy earth, how canst thou bear my
weight?

O death, death, death, thou ever-floating
cloud,

There are enough unhappy on this
earth, — 235

Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;

I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.

Thou weighest heavy on the heart with-
in, —

Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die. 240

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone; for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and
more,

Whereof I catch the issue, — as I hear
 Dead sounds at night come from the in-
 most hills, 245
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
 Conjectures of the features of her child
 Ere it is born. Her child! — a shudder
 comes
 Across me: never child be born of me, 250
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come to
 me
 Walking the cold and starless road of
 death 255
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
 With the Greek woman. I will rise and
 go
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars come
 forth
 Talk with the wild Cassandra; for she
 says
 A fire dances before her, and a sound 260
 Rings ever in her ears of armèd men.
 What this may be I know not; but I know
 That wheresoe'er I am, by night and day,
 All earth and air seem only burning fire.”

LOVE THOU THY LAND

(c. 1833)

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
 From out the storied past, and used
 Within the present, but transfused
 Through future time by power of thought;

True love turned round on fixèd poles,— 5
 Love, that endures not sordid ends,
 For English natures, freemen, friends,
 Thy brothers, and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
 Nor feed with crude imaginings 10
 The herd,— wild hearts and feeble
 wings
 That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
 To weakness; neither hide the ray
 From those, not blind, who wait for
 day, 15
 Though sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
 But let her herald, Reverence, fly
 Before her to whatever sky
 Bear seed of men and growth of minds. 20

Watch what main-currents draw the
 years:
 Cut Prejudice against the grain.
 But gentle words are always gain:
 Regard the weakness of thy peers.

Nor toil for title, place, or touch 25
 Of pension, neither count on praise —
 It grows to guerdon after-days.
 Nor deal in watchwords overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw,
 Not mastered by some modern term, 30
 Not swift nor slow to change, but firm;
 And in its season bring the law,

That from Discussion's lip may fall
 With life that, working strongly,
 binds —
 Set in all lights by many minds, 35
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
 And moist and dry, devising long,
 Through many agents making strong,
 Matures the individual form. 40

Meet is it changes should control
 Our being, lest we rust in ease.
 We all are changed by still degrees,
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free 45
 To ingroove itself with that which
 flies;
 And work, a joint of state, that plies
 Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act:
 For all the past of Time reveals 50
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife
 A motion toiling in the gloom —
 The spirit of the years to come 55
 Yearning to mix himself with life.

A slow-developed strength awaits
 Completion in a painful school:
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,
 New majesties of mighty states — 60

The warders of the growing hour,
 But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
 And round them sea and air are dark
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly joined, 65
 Is bodied forth the second whole.
 Regard gradation, lest the soul
 Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
 And heap their ashes on the head; 70
 To shame the boast, so often made,
 That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
 Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
 To follow flying steps of Truth 75
 Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
 Must ever shock, like armed foes,
 And this be true, till Time shall close,
 That principles are rained in blood: 80

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
 To hold his hope through shame and
 guilt;
 But with his hand against the hilt,
 Would pace the troubled land, like
 Peace;

Not less, though dogs of Faction bay, 85
 Would serve his kind in deed and
 word, —
 Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
 That knowledge takes the sword away:

Would love the gleams of good that broke
 From either side, nor veil his eyes; 90
 And if some dreadful need should rise
 Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke.

Tomorrow yet would reap today,
 As we bear blossom of the dead;
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed 95
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

ULYSSES
 (c. 1834)

It little profits that, an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren
 crags,
 Matched with an aged wife, I mete and
 dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know
 not me. 5

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
 Life to the lees. All times I have en-
 joyed

Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with
 those

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and
 when 9

Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
 Vext the dim sea. I am become a name:
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known, — cities of
 men,

And manners, climates, councils, govern-
 ments, —

Myself not least, but honored of them
 all; 15

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough

Gleams that untravell'd world whose
margin fades 20

For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life
piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me 25
Little remains. But every hour is saved
From that eternal silence,—something
more,

A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard
myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human
thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the
isle—

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil 35
This labor, by slow prudence to make
mild

A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the
sphere

Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I
mine.

 There lies the port; the vessel puffs her
sail:

There gloom the dark, broad seas. My
mariners, 45

Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and
thought with me,—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I
are old:

Old age hath yet his honor and his toil. 50
Death closes all; but something ere the
end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be done,

Not unbecoming men that strove with
gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon
climbs; the deep 55

Moans round with many voices. Come,
my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose
holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us
down;

It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we
knew.

Though much is taken, much abides; and
though 65

We are not now that strength which in
old days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we
are, we are:

One equal temper of heroic hearts,

Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
yield. 70

TITHONUS

(c. 1834)

The woods decay, the woods decay and
fall;

The vapors weep their burthen to the
ground;

Man comes and tills the field and lies
beneath;

And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only, cruel immortality 5

Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,—

A white-haired shadow roaming, like a
dream,

The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of
morn. 10

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a
man, —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he
seemed
To his great heart none other than a god!
I asked thee, "Give me immortality." 15
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a
smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they
give.
But thy strong Hours, indignant, worked
their wills,
And beat me down and marred and wasted
me;
And though they could not end me, left me
maimed 20
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,—
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends; though even
now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide, 25
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill
with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy
gift!
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance 30
Where all should pause, as is most meet
for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart: there
comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was
born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer
steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoul-
ders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renewed.
Thy cheek begins to redden through the
gloom;
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to
mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars; and the wild
team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,
arise, 40
And shake the darkness from their loos-
ened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence; then, before thine answer
given,
Departest; and thy tears are on my
cheek. 45
Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy
tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be
true?
"The gods themselves cannot recall their
gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another
heart 50
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that
watched —
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt
my blood 55
Glow with the glow that slowly crim-
soned all
Thy presence and thy portals: while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-
warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening
buds
Of April; and could hear the lips that
kissed 60
Whispering I knew not what of wild and
sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo
sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with
thine? 65
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me; cold
Are all thy lights; and cold my wrinkled
feet

Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the
 steam
 Floats up from those dim fields about the
 homes
 Of happy men that have the power to
 die, 70
 And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
 Release me, and restore me to the ground!
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my
 grave;
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by
 morn:
 I, earth in earth, forget these empty
 courts, 75
 And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL

(1842)

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as
 yet 'tis early morn:
 Leave me here, and when you want me,
 sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place: and all around it, as of old,
 the curlews call —
 Dreary gleams about the moorland flying
 over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance over-
 looks the sandy tracts, 5
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into
 cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement,
 ere I went to rest,
 Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly
 to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising
 through the mellow shade,
 Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in
 a silver braid. 10

Here about the beach I wandered, nour-
 ishing a youth sublime
 With the fairy-tales of science, and the
 long result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruit-
 ful land reposed;
 When I clung to all the present for the
 promise that it closed;

When I dipt into the future far as human
 eye could see, 15
 Saw the vision of the world, and all the
 wonder that would be. —

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon
 the robin's breast;
 In the spring the wanton lapwing gets
 himself another crest;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the
 burnished dove;
 In the spring a young man's fancy lightly
 turns to thoughts of love. 20

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than
 should be for one so young,
 And her eyes on all my motions with a
 mute observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin, Amy, speak, and
 speak the truth to me:
 Trust me, cousin, all the current of my
 being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a
 color and a light, 25
 As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the
 northern night.

And she turned, — her bosom shaken with
 a sudden storm of sighs, —
 All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark
 of hazel eyes, —

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing
 they should do me wrong;"
 Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?"
 weeping, "I have loved thee long." 30

Love took up the glass of Time, and
 turned it in his glowing hands:
 Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in
 golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote
on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling,
passed in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we
hear the cospes ring, 35
And her whisper thronged my pulses with
the fulness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we
watch the stately ships;
And our spirits rushed together at the
touching of the lips.—

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my
Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary, moorland! O the
barren, barren shore! 40

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than
all songs have sung;
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to
a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having
known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a nar-
rower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his
level day by day, 45
What is fine within thee growing coarse to
sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art
mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have
weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall
have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little
dearer than his horse. 50

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not
they are glazed with wine.
Go to him, it is thy duty: kiss him, take
his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain
is overwrought:
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch
him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things
to understand— 55
Better thou were dead before me, though
I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from
the heart's disgrace,
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in
a last embrace.

Cursèd be the social wants that sin against
the strength of youth!
Cursèd be the social lies that warp us from
the living truth! 60

Cursèd be the sickly forms that err from
honest Nature's rule!
Cursèd be the gold that gilds the straitened
forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—
Hadst thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee
more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which
bears but bitter fruit? 65
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my
heart be at the root.

Never—though my mortal summers to
such length of years should come
As the many-wintered crow that leads the
clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? In division of the
records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her,
as I knew her, kind? 70

I remember one that perished: sweetly did
she speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to look
at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her
for the love she bore?
No — she never loved me truly: love is
love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorned of devils! This
is truth the poet sings, 75
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is re-
membering happier things. —

Drug *thy* memories, — lest thou learn it,
lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the
rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams; and thou
art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and
the shadows rise and fall. 80

Then a hand shall pass before thee, point-
ing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the
tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whis-
pered by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the
ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient
kindness on thy pain: 85
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get
thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a
tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to drain
thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest
rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me
from the mother's breast. 90

O, the child too clothes the father with a
dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be
worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy
petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching
down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides, the feelings
— she herself was not exempt — 95
Truly, she herself had suffered" — Perish
in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy!
Wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I
wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to,
lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barred with gold, and opens
but to golden keys. 100

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all
the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that
which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the
foeman's ground,
When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and
the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the
hurt that Honor feels, 105
And the nations do but murmur, snarling
at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn
that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou
wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt
before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the
tumult of my life; 110

Yearning for the large excitement that the
coming years would yield;
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he
leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near
and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring
like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone
before him then, 115
Underneath the light he looks at, in among
the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever
reaping something new:
That which they have done but earnest of
the things that they shall do.

For I dipt into the future, far as human
eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the
wonder that would be; 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, ar-
gosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping
down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and
there rained a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in
the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the
south-wind rushing warm, 125
With the standards of the peoples plunging
through the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and
the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation
of the world.

There the common sense of most shall
hold a fretful realm in awe;
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt
in universal law. 130

So I triumphed ere my passion sweeping
through me left me dry,—
Left me with the palsied heart, and left
me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things
here are out of joint;
Science moves, but slowly, slowly,—
creeping on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people,— as a lion,
creeping nigher, 135
Glares at one that nods and winks behind
a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one in-
creasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with
the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not har-
vest of his youthful joys,
Though the deep heart of existence beat
for ever like a boy's? 140

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers;
and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world
is more and more.

Knowledge comes; but wisdom lingers, and
he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the
stillness of his rest.—

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sound-
ing on the bugle-horn, 145
They to whom my foolish passion were a
target for their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such
a mouldered string?
I am shamed through all my nature to
have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness!
woman's pleasure, woman's pain —
Nature made them blinder motions
bounded in a shallower brain: 150

Woman is the lesser man; and all thy
passions, matched with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as
water unto wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starred — 155
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day:

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies;
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise; 160

Never comes the trader, — never floats an European flag;
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree —
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There, methinks, would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind, — 165
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions, cramped no longer, shall have scope and breathing space:
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks;
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! But I *know* my words are wild, —
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains, — 175
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time —

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon! 180

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range:
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age, — for mine I knew not, — help me as when life begun: 185
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set!
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall. 190

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or
hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring sea-
ward; and I go.

SIR GALAHAD

(1842)

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.

The shattering trumpet shrilleth high, 5
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel, —
They reel, they roll in clanging lists;
And when the time of combat stands, 10
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end, 15
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bowed in crypt and
shrine;

I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine. 20
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and
thrill;

So keep I fair through faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes, 25
A light before me swims;
Between dark stems the forest glows;
I hear a noise of hymns.

Then by some secret shrine I ride:
I hear a voice, but none are there; 30
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.

Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean;
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings, 35
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark.
I leap on board; no helmsman steers;
I float till all is dark. 40
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God! 45
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Through dreaming towns I go, 50
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and
mail:
But o'er the dark a glory spreads, 55
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields:
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields. 60

A maiden knight — to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease, 65
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear, 70
This weight and size, this heart and eyes
Are touched, are turned to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky;
And through the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony 75
Swell up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near." 80

So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the Holy Grail.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

(1842)

Break, — break, — break, —
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy, 5
 That he shouts with his sister at play!
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill; 10
 But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, — break, — break, —
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead
 Will never come back to me. 16

Songs from THE PRINCESS

(1850. *Proem* of CANTO THIRD)

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea, —
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go, 5
 Come from the dying moon, — and blow,
 Blow him again to me:
 While my little one, while my pretty one,
 sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon; 10
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;

Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon: 15
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
 sleep.

(1848. *Proem* of CANTO FOURTH)

The splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow: set the wild echoes
 flying; 5
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, — dying,
 dying, dying.
 O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far, from cliff and scar,
 The horns of Elfland faintly blow-
 ing! 10
 Blow: let us hear the purple glens reply-
 ing;
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, — dying,
 dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river:
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul, 15
 And grow for ever and for ever.
 Blow, bugle, blow: set the wild echoes
 flying;
 And answer, echoes, answer, — dying,
 dying, dying.

(1847. *From* CANTO FOURTH)

Tears, idle tears, — I know not what
 they mean;
 Tears from the depth of some divine
 despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
 In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
 And thinking of the days that are no
 more. 25

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a
 sail
 That brings our friends up from the un-
 derworld, —

Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the
verge:

So sad, so fresh, the days that are no
more. 30

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns

The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square:

So sad, so strange, the days that are no
more. 35

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy
feigned

On lips that are for others, — deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all re-
gret:

O Death in Life, the days that are no
more! 40

(1850. *Proem of CANTO SIXTH*)

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swooned nor uttered cry.
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low, — 5
Called him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept, 10
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears: 15
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

(1850. *Proem of CANTO SEVENTH*)

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the
sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and
take the shape,

With fold to fold, of mountain or of
cape;
But O, too fond, when have I answered
thee?

Ask me no more. 5

Ask me no more: what answer should I
give?

I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee
die!

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee
live:

Ask me no more. 10

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are
sealed;

I strove against the stream, and all in
vain;

Let the great river take me to the main.
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield:
Ask me no more. 15

(1847. *From CANTO SEVENTH*)

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the
white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry
font.
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like
a ghost, 165
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the
stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and
leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in
me. 170

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBITU MDCCLXXXIII

(1833-49)

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life, in man and brute;
Thou madest Death, — and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not
why, — 10
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine, —
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how; 15
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they. 20

We have but faith: we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
more, 25
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear: 30
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me,
What seemed my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man, 35
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved. 40

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise. 1849

I

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years 5
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drowned,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss. 10
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost, 15
But all he was is overworn."

II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again, 5
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale, 10
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
 I seem to fail from out my blood 15
 And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death, —
 O, sweet and bitter in a breath:
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly
 run, — 5
 A web is woven across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun;

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands, —
 With all the music in her tone 10
 A hollow echo of my own, —
 A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood, 15
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;
 My will is bondsman to the dark;
 I sit within a helmless bark,
 And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now, 5
 That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 "What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early years: 10
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
 That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darkened eyes:
 With morning wakes the will, and 15
 cries,
 "Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;
 For words, like nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain, 5
 A use in measured language lies, —
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the cold; 10
 But that large grief which these enfold
 Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that "other friends remain,"
 That "loss is common to the race" —
 And common is the commonplace,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make 5
 My own less bitter, rather more.
 Too common! Never morning wore
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgedst now thy gallant son, 10
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
 Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor, — while thy head is bowed,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud 15
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home; 21
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, "here today,"
 Or "here tomorrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove, 25
 That sittest ranging golden hair;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest; 30
 And thinking "this will please him
 best,"
 She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on tonight;
 And with the thought her color burns;
 And, having left the glass, she turns 35
 Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turned, the curse
 Had fallen, and her future lord
 Was drowned in passing through the
 ford,
 Or killed in falling from his horse. 40

O what to her shall be the end?
 And what to me remains of good?
 To her perpetual maidenhood,
 And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand
 Here in the long unlovely street, —
 Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasped no more — 5
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
 And like a guilty thing I creep
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here. But far away
 The noise of life begins again; 10
 And ghastly, through the drizzling rain,
 On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
 To look on her that loves him well,
 Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
 And learns her gone and far from home, —

He saddens: all the magic light 5
 Dies off at once from bower and hall,
 And all the place is dark, and all
 The chambers emptied of delight.

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to meet, — 10
 The field, the chamber, and the street;
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind, 15
 Which once she fostered up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which, little cared for, fades not yet. 20

But since it pleased a vanished eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That, if it can, it there may bloom,
 Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn 5
 In vain; a favorable speed
 Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead
 Through prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel; till Phosphor, bright 10
 As our pure love, through early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above, —
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now, 15
 My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widowed race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me. 20

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night;
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife, 5
 And travelled men from foreign lands;
 And letters unto trembling hands;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams;
 This look of quiet flatters thus 10
 Our home-bred fancies. O to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains 15
 The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine, —
 And hands so often clasped in mine,
 Should toss with tangle and with shells. 20

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief;
 And only, through the faded leaf,
 The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold, 5
 And on these dews that drench the
 furze,
 And all the silvery gossamers
 That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain
 That sweeps with all its autumn bow-
 ers, 10
 And crowded farms and lessening tow-
 ers,
 To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
 These leaves that redden to the fall, —
 And in my heart, if calm at all, 15
 If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
 And waves that sway themselves in
 rest, —
 And dead calm in that noble breast
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep. 20

XII

Lo, as a dove, when up she springs
 To bear through heaven a tale of woe,
 Some dolorous message knit below
 The wild pulsation of her wings —

Like her I go, I cannot stay. 5
 I leave this mortal ark behind,
 A weight of nerves without a mind,
 And leave the cliffs; and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
 And reach the glow of southern skies, 10
 And see the sails at distance rise;
 And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, "Comes he thus, my friend?
 Is this the end of all my care?"
 And circle moaning in the air: 15
 "Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play
 About the prow — and back return
 To where the body sits, and learn
 That I have been an hour away. 20

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals, —
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
 Her place is empty, — fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new, 5
 A void where heart on heart reposed;
 And, where warm hands have prest and
 closed,
 Silence, till I be silent too;

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
 An awful thought, a life removed, — 10
 The human-hearted man I loved,
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many years,
 I do not suffer in a dream;
 For now so strange do these things seem,
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears, — 16

My fancies time to rise on wing,
 And glance about the approaching sails,
 As though they brought but merchants'
 bales,
 And not the burthen that they bring. 20

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
 That thou hadst touched the land today,
 And I went down unto the quay,
 And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe, 5
 Should see thy passengers in rank
 Come stepping lightly down the plank,
 And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
 The man I held as half-divine — 10
 Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
 And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
 And how my life had drooped of late;
 And he should sorrow o'er my state, 15
 And marvel what possessed my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the same:
 I should not feel it to be strange. 20

XV

Tonight the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping day:
 The last red leaf is whirled away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest cracked, the waters curled, 25
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dashed on tower and tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the world.

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass 10
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud:
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe 15
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a laboring breast,
 And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire. 20

XVI

What words are these have fallen from
 me?

Can calm despair and wild unrest
 Be tenants of a single breast,
 Or Sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take 5
 The touch of change in calm or storm,—
 But knows no more of transient form
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven? 10
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
 And staggers blindly ere she sink?
 And stunned me from my power to
 think 15
 And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan? 20

XVII

Thou comest, much wept for: such a
 breeze
 Compelled thy canvas, and my prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move 5
 Through circles of the bounding sky,
 Week after week. The days go by:
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light, 10
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,
 And balmy drops in summer dark 15
 Slide from the bosom of the stars:

So kind an office hath been done,
 Such precious relics brought by thee, —
 The dust of him I shall not see 20
 Till all my widowed race be run.

XVIII

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
 Where he in English earth is laid,
 And from his ashes may be made
 The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth 5
 As if the quiet bones were blest
 Among familiar names to rest,
 And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
 That sleeps or wears the mask of 10
 sleep;
 And come, whatever loves to weep,
 And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
 I, falling on his faithful heart,
 Would, breathing through his lips, 15
 impart
 The life that almost dies in me —

That dies not, but endures with pain,
 And slowly forms the firmer mind,
 Treasuring the look it cannot find,
 The words that are not heard again. 20

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
 The darkened heart that beat no more:
 They laid him by the pleasant shore,
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills: 5
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along, —
 And hushed my deepest grief of all, 10
 When, filled with tears that cannot fall,
 I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls:
 My deeper anguish also falls, 15
 And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,
 That breathe a thousand tender vows,
 Are but as servants in a house
 Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is, 5
 And weep the fulness from the mind:
 "It will be hard," they say, "to find
 Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
 That out of words a comfort win. 10
 But there are other griefs within,
 And tears that at their fountain freeze:

For by the hearth the children sit
 Cold in that atmosphere of death,
 And scarce endure to draw the breath, 15
 Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none, —
 So much the vital spirits sink
 To see the vacant chair, and think,
 "How good! how kind! and he is gone." 20

XXI

I sing to him that rests below;
 And, since the grasses round me wave,
 I take the grasses of the grave,
 And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then, 5
 And sometimes harshly will he speak:
 "This fellow would make weakness
 weak,
 And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers: "Let him be, —
 He loves to make parade of pain, 10
 That with his piping he may gain
 The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth: "Is this an hour
 For private sorrow's barren song,
 When more and more the people
 throng 15
 The chairs and thrones of civil power?"

"A time to sicken and to swoon,
 When Science reaches forth her arms
 To feel from world to world, and
 charms
 Her secret from the latest moon?" 20

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
 Ye never knew the sacred dust.
 I do but sing because I must,
 And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay, 25
 For now her little ones have ranged:
 And one is sad; her note is changed,
 Because her brood is stolen away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go,
 Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
 Through four sweet years arose and
 fell,
 From flower to flower, from snow to
 snow;

And we with singing cheered the way; 5
 And, crowned with all the season lent,
 From April on to April went,
 And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walked began
 To slant the fifth autumnal slope, — 10
 As we descended, following Hope,
 There sat the Shadow feared of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
 And spread his mantle dark and cold,
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold, 15
 And dulled the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
 Nor follow, — though I walk in haste,
 And think that somewhere in the waste
 The Shadow sits and waits for me. 20

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
 Or breaking into song by fits, —
 Alone, alone, to where he sits,
 The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds, 5
 I wander; often falling lame,
 And looking back to whence I came,
 Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it
 ran
 Through lands where not a leaf was
 dumb, 10
 But all the lavish hills would hum
 The murmur of a happy Pan;

When each by turns was guide to each,
 And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
 And Thought leapt out to wed with
 Thought 15
 Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
 And all was good that Time could bring,
 And all the secret of the Spring
 Moved in the chambers of the blood; 20

And many an old philosophy
 On Argive heights divinely sang,
 And round us all the thicket rang
 To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
 As pure and perfect as I say?
 The very source and fount of day
 Is dashed with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met, 5
 This earth had been the Paradise
 It never looked to human eyes
 Since our first sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
 Makes former gladness loom so great? 10
 The lowness of the present state,
 That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
 A glory from its being far, 15
 And orb into the perfect star
 We saw not when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life, — the track
 Whereon with equal feet we fared;
 And then, as now, the day prepared
 The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move 5
 As light as carrier-birds in air:
 I loved the weight I had to bear,
 Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
 When mighty Love would cleave in 10
 twain
 The lading of a single pain,
 And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;
 I with it, — for I long to prove
 No lapse of moons can canker Love,
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt 5
 And goodness, and hath power to see
 Within the green the mouldered tree,
 And towers fallen as soon as built, —

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
 Or see — in Him is no before — 10
 In more of life true life no more
 And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,
 That Shadow waiting with the keys, 15
 To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
 The captive void of noble rage,
 The linnet born within the cage,
 That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes 5
 His license in the field of time,
 Unfettered by the sense of crime,
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
 The heart that never plighted troth 10
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall, —
 I feel it, when I sorrow most:
 'Tis better to have loved and lost 15
 Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ.
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round, 5
 From far and near, on mead and moor,
 Swell out, and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease, — 10
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain, —
 I almost wished no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break 15
 Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controlled me when a boy:
 They bring me sorrow touched with
 joy, —
 The merry, merry bells of Yule. 20

XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve
 As daily vexes household peace,
 And chains regret to his decease,
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest 5
 To enrich the threshold of the night
 With showered largess of delight
 In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
 Entwine the cold baptismal font, 10
 Make one wreath more for Use and
 Wont,
 That guard the portals of the house:

Old sisters of a day gone by, .
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new, —
 Why should they miss their yearly
 due 15
 Before their time? They too will die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth;
 A rainy cloud possessed the earth,
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall 5
 We gambolled, making vain pretence
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech;
 We heard them sweep the winter
 land; 10
 And in a circle hand-in-hand
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang:
 We sung, though every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him 15
 Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet.
 "They rest," we said, "their sleep is
 sweet."
 And silence followed; and we wept. 20

Our voices took a higher range;
 Once more we sang: "They do not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they change:

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail 25
 With gathered power, yet the same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from
 night: 30
 O Father, touch the east, and light
 The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
 And home to Mary's house returned,
 Was this demanded: if he yearned
 To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four
 days?" 5
 There lives no record of reply,
 Which, telling what it is to die,
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met;
 The streets were filled with joyful
 sound; 10
 A solemn gladness even crowned
 The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
 The rest remaineth unrevealed:
 He told it not, or something sealed 15
 The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer:
 Nor other thought her mind admits
 But, he was dead, and there he sits,
 And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede 5
 All other, when the ardent gaze
 Roves from the living brother's face,
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
 Borne down by gladness so complete, 10
 She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
 prayers,
 Whose loves in higher love endure:
 What souls possess themselves so pure, 15
 Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm
 Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
 Whose faith has centre everywhere,
 Nor cares to fix itself to form:

Leave thou thy sister, when she prays, 5
 Her early heaven, her happy views;
 Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
 Her hands are quicker unto good. 10
 Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
 To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
 In holding by the law within,
 Thou fail not in a world of sin, 15
 And even for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
 That life shall live for evermore:
 Else earth is darkness at the core,
 And dust and ashes all that is, —

This round of green, this orb of flame, 5
 Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
 In some wild poet, when he works
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
 Of things all mortal; or to use 11
 A little patience ere I die:

'Twere best at once to sink to peace, —
 Like birds the charming serpent draws,
 To drop headforemost in the jaws 15
 Of vacant darkness, and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
 Should murmur from the narrow house,
 "The cheeks drop in, the body bows;
 Man dies, nor is there hope in dust;"

Might I not say, "Yet even here, 5
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive
 To keep so sweet a thing alive"?
 But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
 The sound of streams that swift or 10
 slow
 Draw down æonian hills, and sow
 The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
 "The sound of that forgetful shore
 Will change my sweetness more and 15
 more,
 Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put
 An idle case? If Death were seen
 At first as Death, Love had not been. —
 Or been in narrowest working shut, 20

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods;
 Or in his coarsest satyr-shape
 Had bruised the herb and crushed the
 grape,
 And basked and batted in the woods.

XXXVI

Though truths in manhood darkly join,
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
 We yield all blessing to the name
 Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers, 5
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,
 When truth embodied in a tale
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
 With human hands the creed of creeds 10
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
 And those wild eyes that watch the
 wave 15
 In roarings round the coral reef

XXXVII

Urania speaks with darkened brow:
 "Thou pratest here where thou art
 least;
 This faith has many a purer priest,
 And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill, 5
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
 About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,
 A touch of shame upon her cheek: 10
 "I am not worthy even to speak
 Of thy prevailing mysteries;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,
 And owning but a little art
 To lull with song an aching heart, 15
 And render human love his dues.

"But brooding on the dear one dead,
 And all he said of things divine —
 And dear to me as sacred wine
 To dying lips is all he said — 20

"I murmured, as I came along,
 Of comfort clasped in truth revealed,
 And loitered in the master's field,
 And darkened sanctities with song."

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Though always, under altered skies,
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives, — 5
 The herald melodies of spring;
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits rendered free, 10
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones, —
 And answering now my random stroke
 With fruitful cloud and living smoke, —
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head, 5
 To thee too comes the golden hour
 When flower is feeling after flower;
 But Sorrow, fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men —
 What whispered from her dying lips? 10
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
 And passes into gloom again.

XL

Could we forget the widowed hour,
 And look on Spirits breathed away
 As on a maiden in the day
 When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crowned with blessing she doth
 rise 5
 To take her latest leave of home,
 And hopes and light regrets that come
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
 And tears are on the mother's face, 10
 As parting with a long embrace
 She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
 Becoming as is meet and fit
 A link among the days, to knit 15
 The generations each with each:

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
 A life that bears immortal fruit
 In those great offices that suit 20
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
 How often shall her old fireside
 Be cheered with tidings of the bride, —
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told, 25
 And bring her babe, and make her
 boast,
 Till even those that missed her most
 Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
 Till growing winters lay me low; 30
 My paths are in the fields I know,
 And thine in undiscovered lands.

XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
 Did ever rise from high to higher;
 As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
 As flies the lighter through the gross.

But thou art turned to something
 strange, 5
 And I have lost the links that bound
 Thy changes — here upon the ground,
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be:
 That I could wing my will with
 might 10
 To leap the grades of life and light,
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For though my nature rarely yields
 To that vague fear implied in death,
 Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath, 15
 The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
 An inner trouble I behold,
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
 That I shall be thy mate no more; 20

Though following with an upward mind
 The wonders that have come to thee,
 Through all the secular to-be,
 But evermore a life behind.

XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.
 He still outstript me in the race:
 It was but unity of place
 That made me dream I ranked with him.

And so may Place retain us still; 5
 And he the much-beloved again,
 A lord of large experience, train
 To riper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps, 10
 When one that loves, but knows not,
 reaps
 A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
 And every spirit's folded bloom
 Through all its intervital gloom
 In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour, 5
 Bare of the body, might it last,
 And silent traces of the past
 Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
 So that still garden of the souls 10
 In many a figured leaf enrolls
 The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
 As when he loved me here in Time,
 And at the spiritual prime 15
 Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead?
 For here the man is more and more;
 But he forgets the days before
 God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanished, tone and tint, 5
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
 Gives out at times—he knows not
 whence—
 A little flash, a mystic hint:

And in the long harmonious years—
 If Death so taste Lethean springs— 10
 May some dim touch of earthly things
 Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
 O turn thee round, resolve the doubt:
 My guardian angel will speak out 15
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,
 What time his tender palm is prest
 Against the circle of the breast,
 Has never thought that "this is I";

But as he grows he gathers much, 5
 And learns the use of "I" and "me,"
 And finds "I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
 From whence clear memory may be-
 gin, 10
 As through the frame that binds him in
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their due,
 Had man to learn himself anew 15
 Beyond the second birth of death.

XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,—
 The path we came by, thorn and flower,
 Is shadowed by the growing hour,
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it. There, no shade can last, 5
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb;
 But clear from marge to marge shall
 bloom
 The eternal landscape of the past:

A lifelong tract of time revealed,
 The fruitful hours of still increase; 10
 Days ordered in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching far:
 Look also, Love, a brooding star, 15
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,
 Should move his rounds, and fusing all
 The skirts of self again, should fall
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet. 5
 Eternal form shall still divide
 The eternal soul from all beside;
 And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good. 10
 What vaster dream can hit the mood
 Of Love on earth? He seeks, at least,

Upon the last and sharpest height,
 Before the spirits fade away,
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say, 15
 "Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here pro-
posed,

Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove: 5
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love;

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law, 10
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords;

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip 15
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let, random influences glance,
Like light in many a shivered lance
That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp, 5
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that
make 10

The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencilled shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears,
Ay me! the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown 15
The bases of my life in tears.

L

Be near me when my light is low;
When the blood creeps, and the nerves
prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame 5
Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring, 10
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
And weave their petty cells, and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And, on the low dark verge of life, 15
The twilight of eternal day.

LI

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove, — 5
I had such reverence for his blame, —
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessened in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue.
Shall love be blamed for want of
faith? 10

There must be wisdom with great
Death:
The dead shall look me through and
through.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours, 15
To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved:
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive
song," 5

The Spirit of true love replied;
"Thou canst not move me from thy
side,

Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
 To that ideal which he bears? 10
 What record? Not the sinless years
 That breathed beneath the Syrian blue.

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
 That life is dashed with flecks of sin.
 Abide: thy wealth is gathered in 15
 When Time hath sundered shell from
 pearl."

LIII

How many a father have I seen, —
 A sober man, among his boys, —
 Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and green;

And dare we to this fancy give, 5
 That had the wild oat not been sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
 The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of youth, 10
 Yet who would preach it as a truth
 To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good, define it well;
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark, and be 15
 Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill, —
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet; 5
 That not one life shall be destroyed,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
 That not a moth with vain desire 10
 Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything:
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last — far off — at last, to all, 15
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
 An infant crying in the night;
 An infant crying for the light;
 And with no language but a cry. 20

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife, 5
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds, 10
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear, —

I falter where I firmly trod;
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs 15
 That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope. 20

LVI

"So careful of the type?" But no:
 From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone
 She cries, "A thousand types are gone:
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me: 5
 I bring to life, I bring to death;
 The spirit does but mean the breath:
 I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes, — 10
 Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed,
 And love Creation's final law —
 Though Nature, red in tooth and 15
 claw
 With ravine, shrieked against his creed —

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just, —
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or sealed within the iron hills? 20

No more? A monster then, a dream,
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,
 That tare each other in their slime,
 Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail! 25
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
 What hope of answer, or redress?
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe
 Is after all an earthly song.
 Peace; come away: we do him wrong
 To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale; 5
 But half my life I leave behind.
 Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
 But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
 One set slow bell will seem to toll 10
 The passing of the sweetest soul
 That ever looked with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
 Eternal greetings to the dead;
 And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said, 15
 "Adieu, adieu," for evermore.

LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell.
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
 As drop by drop the water falls
 In vaults and catacombs, they fells;

And, falling, idly broke the peace 5
 Of hearts that beat from day to day,
 Half-conscious of their dying clay
 And those old crypts where they shall
 cease.

The high Muse answered: "Wherefore
 grieve
 Thy brethren with a fruitless tear? 10
 Abide a little longer here,
 And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
 No casual mistress, but a wife,
 My bosom-friend and half of life,
 As I confess it needs must be, —

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood, 5
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
 And put thy harsher moods aside,
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
 Nor will it lessen from today; 10
 But I'll have leave at times to play
 As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
 With so much hope for years to come,
 That, howso'er I know thee, some 15
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX

He past, a soul of nobler tone:
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,
 Like some poor girl whose heart is set
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere, 5
 She finds the baseness of her lot,
 Half jealous of she knows not what,
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
 She sighs amid her narrow days, 10
 Moving about the household ways,
 In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
 And tease her till the day draws by;
 At night she weeps, "How vain am I! 15
 How should he love a thing so lōw?"

LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,
 Thy ransomed reason change replies
 With all the circle of the wise,
 The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below, 5
 How dimly characterized and slight,
 How dwarfed a growth of cold and
 night,
 How blanched with darkness must I
 grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
 Where thy first form was made a
 man: 10
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
 The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXII

Though if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat blench or
 fail,
 Then be my love an idle tale,
 And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined, 5
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart, with joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies, 10
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has part,
 Can hang no weight upon my heart
 In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these 5
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,
 And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound, 10
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar, 5
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden keys, 10
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
 The pillar of a people's hope, 15
 The centre of a world's desire:

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are still.
 A distant dearthness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream, — 20

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He played at counsellors and kings,
 With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea 25
 And reaps the labor of his hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands:
 "Does my old friend remember me?"

LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt.
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost,
 With "Love's too precious to be lost,
 A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing, 5
 Till, out of painful phases wrought,
 There flutters up a happy thought,
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,
 And thine effect so lives in me, 10
 A part of mine may live in thee
 And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;
 You wonder, when my fancies play,
 To find me gay among the gay,
 Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost, 5
 Which makes a desert in the mind,
 Has made me kindly with my kind,
 And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided through the land,
 Whose jest among his friends is free, 10
 Who takes the children on his knee,
 And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
 For pastime, dreaming of the sky:
 His inner day can never die, 15
 His night of loss is always there.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
 I know that in thy place of rest
 By that broad water of the west
 There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears, 5
 As slowly steals a silver flame
 Along the letters of thy name,
 And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
 From off my bed the moonlight dies; 10
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn,
 A lucid veil, from coast to coast; 15
 And in the dark church like a ghost
 Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my
 breath:
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not
 Death,
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

I walk as ere I walked forlorn, 5
 When all our path was fresh with dew,
 And all the bugle breezes blew
 Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
 I find a trouble in thine eye, 10
 Which makes me sad I know not why,
 Nor can my dream resolve the doubt;

But ere the lark hath left the lea
 I wake, and I discern the truth:
 It is the trouble of my youth 15
 That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX

I dreamed there would be Spring no more,
 That Nature's ancient power was lost;
 The streets were black with smoke and
 frost,
 They chattered trifles at the door.

I wandered from the noisy town, 5
 I found a wood with thorny boughs;
 I took the thorns to bind my brows,
 I wore them like a civic crown.

I met with scoffs, I met with scorn,
 From youth and babe and hoary
 hairs: 10

They called me in the public squares
 The fool that wears a crown of thorns;

They called me fool, they called me child.
 I found an angel of the night;
 The voice was low, the look was
 bright; 15
 He looked upon my crown and smiled.

He reached the glory of a hand,
 That seemed to touch it into leaf:
 The voice was not the voice of grief,
 The words were hard to understand. 20

LXX

I cannot see the features right,
 When on the gloom I strive to paint
 The face I know; the hues are faint
 And mix with hollow masks of night:

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons
 wrought, 5
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
 A hand that points, and pallèd shapes
 In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning
 doors,
 And shoals of puckered faces, drive; 10
 Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
 And lazy lengths on boundless shores:

Till all at once, beyond the will,
 I hear a wizard music roll;
 And through a lattice, on the soul 15
 Looks thy fair face, and makes it still.

LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
 And madness, thou hast forged at last
 A night-long present of the past
 In which we went through summer
 France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul? 5
 Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
 Drug down the blindfold sense of
 wrong,
 That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk, as once we talked,
 Of men and minds, the dust of
 change, 10
 The days that grow to something
 strange,—
 In walking, as of old we walked,

Beside the river's wooded reach,
 The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
 The cataract flashing from the bridge, 15
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 And howlest, issuing out of night,
 With blasts that blow the poplar white,
 And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crowned estate begun 5
 To pine in that reverse of doom,
 Which sickened every living bloom,
 And blurred the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
 With thy quick tears that make the
 rose 10
 Pull sideways, and the daisy close
 Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame
 Up the deep East, or, whispering,
 played
 A chequer-work of beam and shade 15
 Along the hills, yet looked the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now,—
 Day, marked as with some hideous
 crime,
 When the dark hand struck down
 through time,
 And cancelled nature's best. But thou, 20

Lift as thou mayst thy burthened brows
 Through clouds that drench the morn-
 ing star,
 And whirl the ungarnered sheaf afar,
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound 25
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
 Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
 And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,
 So little done, such things to be,—
 How know I what had need of thee,
 For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quenched that I foresaw, 5
 The head hath missed an earthly
 wreath:
 I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds: 10
 What fame is left for human deeds
 In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
 Fade wholly; while the soul exults,
 And self-infolds the large results 15
 Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
 To those that watch it more and more,
 A likeness, hardly seen before,
 Comes out, — to some one of his race;

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold, 5
 I see thee what thou art, and know
 Thy likeness to the wise below,
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
 And what I see I leave unsaid, 10
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpressed
 In verse that brings myself relief,
 And by the measure of my grief
 I leave thy greatness to be guessed.

What practice howsoe'er expert 5
 In fitting aptest words to things,
 Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
 To raise a cry that lasts not long, 10
 And round thee with the breeze of
 song
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perished in the green,
 And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
 The world which credits what is done 15
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
 But somewhere, out of human view,
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim. 20

LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
 And in a moment set thy face
 Where all the starry heavens of space
 Are sharpened to a needle's end.

Take wings of foresight; lighten through 5
 The secular abyss to come,
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
 Before the mouldering of a yew.

And if the matin songs, that woke
 The darkness of our planet, last, 10
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy
 bowers
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
 And what are they when these re-
 main 15
 The ruined shells of hollow towers?

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here:
 "My love shall now no further range;
 There cannot come a mellow change,
 For now is love mature in ear"?

Love, then, had hope of richer store: 5
 What end is here to my complaint?
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,
 "More years had made me love thee
 more."

But Death returns an answer sweet:
 "My sudden frost was sudden gain, 10
 And gave all ripeness to the grain
 It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and face;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on, 5
 From state to state the spirit walks;
 And these are but the shattered stalks,
 Or ruined chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
 The use of virtue out of earth; 10
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart:
 He put our lives so far apart 15
 We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
 O sweet new-year delaying long:
 Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons, 5
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?
 Can trouble live with April days,
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
 The little speedwell's darling blue, 10
 Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou new-year, delaying long,
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
 That longs to burst a frozen bud 15
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone
 The life that had been thine below,
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow
 To which thy crescent would have grown,

I see thee sitting crowned with good, 5
 A central warmth diffusing bliss
 In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
 On all the branches of thy blood,—

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine.
 For now the day was drawing on, 10
 When thou shouldst link thy life with
 one
 Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee;
 But that remorseless iron hour
 Made cypress of her orange flower, 15
 Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call them mine:
 I see their unborn faces shine
 Beside the never-lighted fire. 20

I see myself an honored guest,—
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills 25
 The lips of men with honest praise;
 And sun by sun the happy days
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
 And all the train of bounteous hours 30
 Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of thought, 35
 Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
 As linked with thine in love and fate,
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
 To the other shore, involved in thee, 40

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
 And He that died in Holy Land
 Would reach us out the shining hand,
 And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant? 45
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
 The old bitterness again, and break
 The low beginnings of content?

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
 I felt it when I sorrowed most;
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed, 5
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimmed of sorrow, or sustained; 10
 And whether love for him have drained
 My capabilities of love:

Your words have virtue such as draws
 A faithful answer from the breast,
 Through light reproaches, half ex-
 prest, 15
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touched him, and he slept. 20

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him through the blissful climes, 25
 And showed him in the fountain fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remained, whose hopes were dim,—
 Whose life, whose thoughts, were little
 worth, — 30
 To wander on a darkened earth,
 Where all things round me breathed of
 him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion warm,
 O sacred essence, other form, 35
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands
 By which we dare to live or die. 40

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, though left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine,—

A life that all the Muses decked 45
 With gifts of grace, that might express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilizing intellect;

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find 50
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,
 Diffused the shock through all my
 life, 55
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men. 60

I woo your love: I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch,—
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had mastered Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is 65
 Eternal, separate from fears.
 The all-assuming months and years
 Can take no part away from this;

But Summer on the steaming floods,
 And Spring that swells the narrow
 brooks, 70
 And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
 Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb, 75
 And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
 "Arise, and get thee forth and seek
 A friendship for the years to come. 80

"I watch thee from the quiet shore;
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
 But in dear words of human speech
 We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain 85
 The starry clearness of the free?
 How is it? Canst thou feel for me
 Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall:
 "'Tis hard for thee to fathom this; 90
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,
 And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead;
 Or so methinks the dead would say;
 Or so shall grief with symbols play 95
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
 That these things pass, and I shall
 prove
 A meeting somewhere, love with love,—
 I crave your pardon, O my friend: 100

If not so fresh, with love as true,
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver
 I could not, if I would, transfer
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart 105
 The promise of the golden hours?
 First love, first friendship, equal powers,
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
 That beats within a lonely place, 110
 That yet remembers his embrace,
 But at his footstep leaps no more,—

My heart, though widowed, may not rest
 Quite in the love of what is gone,
 But seeks to beat in time with one 115
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
 As not unlike to that of Spring. 120

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
 Of evening, over brake and bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, — and rapt below 5
Through all the dewy-tasselled wood,
And shadowing down the hornèd flood
In ripples, — fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy
breath 10
Throughout my frame: till Doubt and
Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas,
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star 15
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random through the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes 5
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazoned on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars 10
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past 15
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.
I lingered; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crashed the glass and beat the
floor; 20

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair, 25
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing
ear 30
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point? with power and
grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw 35
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo. 40

LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden through the budded quicks,
O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate. Fierce extremes em-
ploy 5
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy.

And I — my harp would prelude woe —
I cannot all command the strings: 10
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and
height
Of foliage, towering sycamore:

How often, hither wandering down, 5
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;
 He mixt in all our simple sports; 10
 They pleased him, fresh from brawling
 courts

And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark 15
 The landscape winking through the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
 The gust that round the garden flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears! 20

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn!

Or in the all-golden afternoon 25
 A guest, or happy sister, sung;
 Or here she brought the harp, and flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray, 30
 And break the livelong summer day
 With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
 Discussed the books to love or hate,
 Or touched the changes of the state, 35
 Or threaded some Socratic dream.

But if I praised the busy town,
 He loved to rail against it still,
 For "ground in yonder social mill
 We rub each other's angles down, 40

"And merge," he said, "in form, and gloss
 The picturesque of man and man."
 We talked: the stream beneath us ran,
 The wine-flask lying couched in moss,

Or cooled within the glooming wave. 45
 And last, returning from afar,
 Before the crimson-circled star
 Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
 We heard behind the woodbine veil 50
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,
 And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,
 Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
 Where highest heaven, who first could
 fling

This bitter seed among mankind:

That could the dead, whose dying eyes 5
 Were closed with wail, resume their
 life,

They would but find in child and wife
 An iron welcome when they rise.

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with
 wine,

To pledge them with a kindly tear, 10
 To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
 To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
 Behold their brides in other hands;
 The hard heir strides about their
 lands, 15

And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, though their sons were none of these,
 Not less the yet-loved sire would make
 Confusion worse than death, and shake
 The pillars of domestic peace. 20

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
 Whatever change the years have
 wrought,

I find not yet one lonely thought
 That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
 And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,
 Or underneath the barren bush
 Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know 5
 Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
 The hope of unaccomplished years
 Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
 May breathe, with many roses sweet, 10
 Upon the thousand waves of wheat
 That ripple round the lowly grange,

Come; not in watches of the night,
 But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
 Come, beauteous in thine after form, 15
 And like a finer light in light.

XCII

If any vision should reveal
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain
 As but the canker of the brain.
 Yea, though it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast 5
 Together in the days behind,
 I might but say, I hear a wind
 Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, though if spake and bared to view
 A fact within the coming year; 10
 And though the months, revolving near,
 Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
 But spiritual presentiments,
 And such refraction of events 15
 As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
 No spirit ever brake the band
 That stays him from the native land
 Where first he walked when claspt in
 clay?

No visual shade of some one lost, 5
 But he, the Spirit himself, may come
 Where all the nerve of sense is numb,—
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O therefore from thy sightless range
 With gods in un conjectured bliss, 10
 O, from the distance of the abyss
 Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter: hear
 The wish too strong for words to name,
 That in this blindness of the frame 15
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
 With what divine affections bold,
 Should be the man whose thought would
 hold
 An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call 5
 The spirits from their golden day,
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
 Imaginations calm and fair, 10
 The memory like a cloudless air,
 The conscience as a sea at rest;

But when the heart is full of din,
 And doubt beside the portal waits, 15
 They can but listen at the gates,
 And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we lingered on the lawn,
 For underfoot the herb was dry;
 And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
 The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn 5
 Unwavering. Not a cricket chirred;
 The brook alone far-off was heard,
 And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies;
 And wheeled, or lit, the filmy shapes 10
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine
 capes
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that pealed
 From knoll to knoll, where, couched at
 ease,
 The white kine glimmered, and the
 trees 15
 Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and
 night,
 And in the house light after light
 Went out, and I was all alone, 20

A hunger seized my heart: I read
 Of that glad year which once had been,
 In those fallen leaves which kept their
 green, —
 The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke 25
 The silent-speaking words; and strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying change
 To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward
 back, 30
 And keen through wordy snares to track
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touched me from the
 past:
 And all at once it seemed at last 35
 The living soul was flashed on mine;

And mine in this was wound, and whirled
 About empyreal heights of thought;
 And came on that which is, and caught
 The deep pulsations of the world, 40

Æonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time,—the shocks of
 Chance, —
 The blows of Death. At length my
 trance
 Was cancelled, stricken through with
 doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to
 frame 45

In matter-moulded forms of speech,
 Or even for intellect to reach
 Through memory that which I became —

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
 The knolls once more where, couched
 at ease, 50
 The white kine glimmered, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field;

And sucked from out the distant gloom,
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore, 55
 And fluctuate all the still perfume;

And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and
 swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said, 60

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away:
 And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and
 death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue
 eyes
 Are tender over drowning flies, —
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew 5
 In many a subtle question versed,
 Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
 But ever strove to make it true:

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
 At last he beat his music out. 10
 There lives more faith in honest doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered
 strength,
 He would not make his judgment blind,
 He faced the spectres of the mind 15
 And laid them. Thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
 And Power was with him in the night,
 Which makes the darkness and the light,
 And dwells not in the light alone, 20

But in the darkness and the cloud,—
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,
 While Israel made their gods of gold,
 Although the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII

My love has talked with rocks and trees;
 He finds on misty mountain-ground
 His own vast shadow glory-crowned;
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life — 5
 I looked on these and thought of thee
 In vastness and in mystery,
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,
 Their hearts of old have beat in tune, 10
 Their meetings made December June,
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away:
 The days she never can forget
 Are earnest that he loves her yet, 15
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart:
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,
 Though rapt in matters dark and deep,
 He seems to slight her simple heart. 20

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
 He reads the secret of the star,
 He seems so near and yet so far,
 He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before, 25
 A withered violet is her bliss;
 She knows not what his greatness is —
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
 Of early faith and plighted vows; 30
 She knows but matters of the house,
 And he, — he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
 She darkly feels him great and wise,
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes: 35
 "I cannot understand; I love."

XCVIII

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
 And those fair hills I sailed below
 When I was there with him; and go
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath, 5
 That city. All her splendor seems
 No livelier than the wisp that gleams
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
 Entwine her isles, unmarked of me. 10
 I have not seen, I will not see
 Vienna, — rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil, haunts
 The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend 15
 Above more graves; a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
 By each cold hearth; and sadness flings
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings.
 And yet myself have heard him say 20

That not in any mother town
 With statelier progress, to and fro,
 The double tides of chariots flow
 By park and suburb, under brown

Of lustier leaves. Nor more content, 25
 He told me, lives in any crowd,
 When all is gay with lamps, and loud
 With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
 And wheels the circled dance, and
 breaks 30
 The rocket molten into flakes
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 So loud with voices of the birds,
 So thick with lowings of the herds, —
 Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest, through thy darkling red, 5
 On yon swollen brook that bubbles fast
 By meadows breathing of the past,
 And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
 A song that slights the coming care, 10
 And autumn laying here and there
 A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath,
 To myriads on the genial earth,
 Memories of bridal, or of birth; 15
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
 Today they count as kindred souls:
 They know me not, but mourn with me. 20

C

I climb the hill. From end to end
 Of all the landscape underneath,
 I find no place that does not breathe
 Some gracious memory of my friend:

No gray old grange, or lonely fold, 5
 Or low morass and whispering reed,
 Or simple stile from mead to mead,
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
 That hears the latest linnet trill, 10
 Nor quarry trenched along the hill
 And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
 To left and right through meadowy
 curves, 15
 That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
 And each reflects a kindlier day;
 And, leaving these, to pass away,
 I think once more he seems to die. 20

CI

Unwatched, the garden bough shall sway,
 The tender blossom flutter down;
 Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
 This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair, 5
 Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
 And many a rose-carnation feed
 With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
 The brook shall babble down the
 plain, 10
 At noon or when the Lesser Wain
 Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
 And flood the haunts of hern and crake,
 Or into silver arrows break 15
 The sailing moon in creek and cove:

Till from the garden and the wild
 A fresh association blow,
 And year by year the landscape grow
 Familiar to the stranger's child; 20

As year by year the laborer tills
 His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
 And year by year our memory fades
 From all the circle of the hills.

CII

We leave the well-belovèd place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs that heard our earliest cry
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go; but ere we go from home, 5
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard 10
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have strayed in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bow-
ers, 15
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim, —
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way. 20

I turn to go; my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms:
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dreamed a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall, 5
And maidens with me; distant hills,
From hidden summits, fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good 10
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veiled, to which they sang;

And which, though veiled, was known to
me, —

The shape of him I loved, and love
For ever. Then flew in a dove 15
And brought a summons from the sea;

And when they learnt that I must go,
They wept and wailed, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below: 20

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the
banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore, 25
And rolled the floods in grander space,
The maidens gathered strength and
grace
And presence, lordlier than before.

And I myself, who sat apart
And watched them, waxed in every
limb; 30
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race which is to be, 35
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides. 40

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind 45
Bewailed their lot; I did them wrong:
"We served thee here," they said, "so
long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips; but he 50
 Replying, "Enter likewise ye
 And go with us;" they entered in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steered her toward a crimson 55
 cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 A single church below the hill
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below, 5
 That wakens at this hour of rest
 A single murmur in the breast,
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
 In lands where not a memory strays, 10
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,
 But all is new unhallowed ground.

CV

Tonight ungathered let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand:
 We live within the stranger's land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone 5
 And silent under other snows:
 There in due time the woodbine blows,
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
 The genial hour with mask and mime; 10
 For change of place, like growth of time,
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,
 A little spare the night I loved, 15
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
 For who would keep an ancient form
 Through which the spirit breathes no 20
 more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
 Nor harp be touched, nor flute be blown;
 No dance, no motion, — save alone
 What lightens in the lucid East

Of rising worlds by yonder wood. 25
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed:
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
 The year is dying in the night;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new, — 5
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 The year is going, let him go;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more; 10
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife;
 Ring in the nobler modes of life, 15
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the times;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
 But ring the fuller minstrel in. 20

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease; 25
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand; 30
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

It is the day when he was born,
 A bitter day that early sank
 Behind a purple-frosty bank
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves 5
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
 The blast of North and East; and ice
 Makes daggers at the sharpened eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
 To yon hard crescent, — as she hangs 10
 Above the wood which grides and clangs
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
 To darken on the rolling brine
 That breaks the coast. But fetch the
 wine, 15
 Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
 To make a solid core of heat;
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
 Of all things even as he were by: 20

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
 With books and music, surely we
 Will drink to him, where'er he be,
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,
 I will not eat my heart alone,
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith, 5
 And vacant yearning, though with might
 To scale the heaven's highest height,
 Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,
 But mine own phantom chanting 10
 hymns?
 And on the depths of death there swims
 The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
 Of sorrow under human skies:
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise, 15
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
 From household fountains never dry;
 The critic clearness of an eye
 That saw through all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force 5
 To seize and throw the doubts of man;
 Impassioned logic, which outran
 The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
 But touched with no ascetic gloom; 10
 And passion pure in snowy bloom
 Through all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt, —
 Of freedom in her regal seat
 Of England; not the schoolboy heat, 15
 The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
 In such a sort, the child would twine
 A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
 And find his comfort in thy face: 20

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
 Have looked on; if they looked in vain,
 My shame is greater who remain,
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years;
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung, 5
The proud was half disarmed of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school 10
And heard thee; and the brazen fool
Was softened, and he knew not why:

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were
thine, 15
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will. 20

CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, through all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown, —

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil 5
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons through the gilded pale;

For who can always act? But he,
To whom a thousand memories call, — 10
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be, —

Best seemed the thing he was, and joined
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower 15
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye
Where God and Nature met in light; 20

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room 5
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? Some novel power
Sprang up for ever at a touch, 10
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour, —

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest made;
And world-wide fluctuation swayed 15
In vassal tides that followed thought.

CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen 5
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent, 10
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm, —

Should licensed boldness gather force,
 Becoming, when the time has birth,
 A lever to uplift the earth 15
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
 With agonies, with energies,
 With overthrowings, and with cries,
 And undulations to and fro. 20

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall
 rail
 Against her beauty? May she mix
 With men and prosper! Who shall fix
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire: 5
 She sets her forward countenance
 And leaps into the future chance,
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
 She cannot fight the fear of death. 10
 What is she, cut from love and faith,
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her place: 15
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain, and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
 With Wisdom, like the younger child; 20

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O friend, who camest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee, 25
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and hour
 In reverence and in charity.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow;
 Now burgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares; and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long; 5
 The distance takes a lovelier hue;
 And drowned in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea;
 The flocks are whiter down the vale; 10
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, — and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky 15
 To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land: and in my breast
 Spring wakens too; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest. 20

CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives and takes
 The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air, 5
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry through the sense to hearten trust
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
 Upon me, while I muse alone, 10
 And that dear voice, I once have known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune dead, —
 Less yearning for the friendship fled, 15
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue 5
Desire of nearness doubly sweet, —
And unto meeting, when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals, 10
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead 5
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms, 10
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branched from clime to
clime,
The herald of a higher race, —
And of himself in higher place, 15
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crowned with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore, 20

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly 25
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast:
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more. The city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see 5
Betwixt the black fronts, long-with-
drawn,
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee; for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye; 10
And in my thoughts, with scarce a sigh,
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with
Death —

Not only cunning casts in clay: 5
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape 10
His action like the greater ape;
But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done!

The team is loosened from the wain, 5
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darkened in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
 By thee the world's great work is heard 10
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
 Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,
 And voices hail it from the brink;
 Thou hear'st the village hammer clink, 15
 And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
 For what is one, the first, the last,
 Thou, like my present and my past, —
 Thy place is changed: thou art the same. 20

CXXII

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
 While I rose up against my doom,
 And yearned to burst the folded gloom,
 To bare the eternal heavens again, —

To feel once more, in placid awe, 5
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my soul,
 In all her motion one with law?

If thou wert with me, and the grave
 Divide us not, be with me now, 10
 And enter in at breast and brow, —
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quickened with a livelier breath,
 And like an inconsiderate boy,
 As in the former flash of joy, 15
 I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
 And every dewdrop paints a bow,
 The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
 And every thought breaks out a rose. 20

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
 O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
 There, where the long street roars, hath
 been
 The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow 5
 From form to form, and nothing stands;
 They melt like mist, the solid lands, —
 Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
 And dream my dream, and hold it true; 10
 For though my lips may breathe adieu,
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
 Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt:
 He, They, One, All; within, without;
 The Power in darkness whom we guess, —

I found Him not in world or sun, 5
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,
 Nor through the questions men may try,
 The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep, 5
 I heard a voice, "Believe no more," 10
 And heard an ever-breaking shore
 That tumbled in the Godless deep, —

A warmth within the breast would melt
 The freezing reason's colder part,
 And like a man in wrath the heart 15
 Stood up and answered, "I have felt."

No — like a child in doubt and fear:
 But that blind clamor made me wise;
 Then was I as a child that cries,
 But, crying, knows his father near; 20

And what I am beheld again
 What is, and no man understands;
 And out of darkness came the hands
 That reach through nature, moulding men.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,
 Some bitter notes my harp would give,
 Yea, though there often seemed to live
 A contradiction on the tongue:

Yet Hope had never lost her youth, 5
 She did but look through dimmer eyes;
 Or Love but played with gracious lies,
 Because he felt so fixed in truth.

And if the song were full of care,
 He breathed the spirit of the song; 10
 And if the words were sweet and strong
 He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
 To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
 And this electric force, that keeps 15
 A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI

Love is and was my lord and king,
 And in his presence I attend
 To hear the tidings of my friend,
 Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord, 5
 And it will be; though as yet I keep
 Within the court on earth, and sleep
 Encompassed by his faithful guard;

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to place, 10
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII

And all is well, though faith and form
 Be sundered in the night of fear:
 Well roars the storm to those that hear
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread, 5
 And justice, even though thrice again
 The red fool-fury of the Seine
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown;
 And him, the lazar, in his rags! 10
 They tremble, the sustaining crags;
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
 The fortress crashes from on high,
 The brute earth lightens to the sky, 15
 And the great æon sinks in blood,

And compassed by the fires of hell;
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
 O'erlookest the tumult from afar,
 And smilest, knowing all is well. 20

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,
 Is comrade of the lesser faith
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood 5
 Of onward time shall yet be made,
 And throned races may degrade;
 Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear, 10
 If all your office had to do
 With old results that look like new —
 If this were all your mission here:

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
 To cleave a creed in sects and cries, 15
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness picturesque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower: 20

Why, then my scorn might well descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal, —
 O loved the most, when most I feel
 There is a lower and a higher:

Known and unknown, human, divine: 5
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not
 die, —
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, — past, present, and to be;
 Loved deeper, darker understood: 10
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess; 5
 But though I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now; 10
 Though mixed with God and Nature
 thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice; 15
 I shall not lose thee though I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow through our deeds and make them
 pure;

That we may lift from out of dust 5
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquered years
 To one that with us works; and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
 The truths that never can be proved 10
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;
 In that it is thy marriage day
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss 5
 Since first he told me that he loved
 A daughter of our house; nor proved,
 Since that dark day, a day like this;

Though I since then have numbered o'er
 Some thrice three years: they went and
 came, 10
 Remade the blood and changed the
 frame,
 And yet is love not less, but more, —

No longer caring to embalm
 In dying songs a dead regret,
 But like a statue solid-set, 15
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
 Than in the summers that are flown,
 For I myself with these have grown
 To something greater than before; 20

Which makes appear the songs I made
 As echoes out of weaker times,
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower, 25
 That must be made a wife ere noon?
 She enters, glowing like the moon
 Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blissful eyes
 And then on thee; they meet thy look 30
 And brighten like the star that shook
 Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,
 He too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows 35
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;
 As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent; wearing all that weight
 Of learning lightly like a flower.

40

But now set out: the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride;
 She fears not, or, with thee beside
 And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
 That watched her on her nurse's arm,
 That shielded all her life from harm,
 At last must part with her to thee;

45

Now waiting to be made a wife, —
 Her feet, my darling, on the dead; —
 Their pensive tablets round her head,
 And the most living words of life

50

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
 The "Wilt thou?" answered, and again
 The "Wilt thou?" asked, till out of
 twain
 Her sweet "I will" has made you one.

55

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
 Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
 By village eyes as yet unborn.
 The names are signed, and overhead

60

Begins the clash and clang that tells
 The joy to every wandering breeze;
 The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
 Await them. Many a merry face
 Salutes them, — maidens of the place,
 That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

65

O happy hour, behold the bride
 With him to whom her hand I gave.
 They leave the porch, they pass the
 grave
 That has today its sunny side.

70

Today the grave is bright for me,
 For them the light of life increased, —
 Who stay to share the morning feast,
 Who rest tonight beside the sea.

75

Let all my genial spirits advance
 To meet and greet a whiter sun;
 My drooping memory will not shun
 The foaming grape of eastern France.

80

It circles round, and fancy plays,
 And hearts are warmed and faces bloom,
 As drinking health to bride and groom
 We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,
 Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
 And, though in silence, wishing joy.

85

But they must go, the time draws on,
 And those white-favored horses wait;
 They rise, but linger; it is late;
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

90

A shade falls on us like the dark
 From little cloudlets on the grass,
 But sweeps away as out we pass
 To range the woods, to roam the park;

95

Discussing how their courtship grew,
 And talk of others that are wed,
 And how she looked, and what he said,
 And back we come at fall of dew.

100

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
 The shade of passing thought, the
 wealth
 Of words and wit, the double health,
 The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance; — till I retire.
 Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
 And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire.

105

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale 110
 All night the shining vapor sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,
 And o'er the friths that branch and
 spread 115
 Their sleeping silver through the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
 And, breaking, let the splendor fall
 To spangle all the happy shores 120

By which they rest, and ocean sounds
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the vast
 And strike his being into bounds;

And, moved through life of lower phase, 125
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, — a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge; under whose com-
 mand 130
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
 Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute, —
 For all we thought and loved and did,
 And hoped, and suffered, is but seed 135
 Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man that with me trod
 This planet was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in God, — 140

That God, which ever lives and loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

(1854)

Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 "Forward the Light Brigade! 5
 Charge for the guns!" he said:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
 Was there a man dismayed? 10
 Not though the soldier knew
 Some one had blundered.
 Theirs not to make reply,
 Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to do and die: 15
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them 20
 Volleyed and thundered.
 Stormed at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well, —
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of hell 25
 Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabres bare,
 Flashed as they turned in air
 Sabring the gunners there, —
 Charging an army, while 30
 All the world wondered.
 Plunged in the battery-smoke
 Right through the line they broke:
 Cossack and Russian
 Reeled from the sabre-stroke 35
 Shattered and sundered.
 Then they rode back, — but not,
 Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them, 40
 Cannon behind them
 Volleyed and thundered.

Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well 45
Came through the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of hell, —
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade? 50
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred! 55

THE BROOK

(*From The Brook, 1855*)

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down, 5
Or slip between the ridges;
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river: 10
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays, 15
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow. 20

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river:
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out, 25
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel 30
With many a silvery water-break
Above the golden gravel, —

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river:
For men may come and men may go, 35
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers. 40

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars 45
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river: 50
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

COME INTO THE GARDEN

(*From Maud, 1855: Part First, section
xxii*)

Come into the garden, Maud, 850
For the black bat, night, has flown:
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted
abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown. 855

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that she
 loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky, —
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die. 861

All night have the roses heard ~
 The flute, violin, bassoon;
 All night has the casement jessamine
 stirred
 To the dancers dancing in tune: 865
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, "There is but one,
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her alone? 870
 She is weary of dance and play."
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,
 And half to the rising day;
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone
 The last wheel echoes away. 875

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
 In babble and revel and wine.
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
 For one that will never be thine?
 But mine, but mine," so I sware to the
 rose, 880
 "For ever and ever, mine."

And the soul of the rose went into my
 blood,
 As the music clashed in the hall;
 And long by the garden lake I stood,
 For I heard your rivulet fall. 885
 From the lake to the meadow and on to
 the wood, —
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so
 sweet
 That whenever a March-wind sighs
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet 890
 In violets blue as your eyes, —
 To the woody hollows in which we meet
 And the valleys of Paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake
 One long milk-bloom on the tree; 895
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
 But the rose was awake all night for your
 sake,
 Knowing your promise to me:
 The lilies and roses were all awake, 900
 They sighed for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done, —
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
 Queen lily and rose in one; 905
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with
 curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.
 She is coming, my dove, my dear; 910
 She is coming, my life, my fate.
 The red rose cries, "She is near, she is
 near;"
 And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
 The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
 And the lily whispers, "I wait." 915

She is coming, my own, my sweet:
 Were it ever so airy a tread,
 My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;
 My dust would hear her and beat, 920
 Had I lain for a century dead, —
 Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.

WILL

(1855)

I

O, well for him whose will is strong!
 He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.
 For him nor moves the loud world's ran-
 dom mock,

Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound;
 Who seems a promontory of rock
 That, compassed round with turbulent
 sound,
 In middle ocean meets the surging
 shock,—
 Tempest-buffed, citadel-crowned.

II

But ill for him who, bettering not with
 time,
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended
 Will,
 And ever weaker grows through acted
 crime,
 Or seeming-genial venial fault,
 Recurring and suggesting still!
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
 Toiling in immeasurable sand:
 And o'er a weary sultry land,
 Far beneath a blazing vault,
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

(1861)

All along the valley, stream that flashest
 white,
 Deepening thy voice with the deepening of
 the night,—
 All along the valley, where thy waters
 flow,
 I walked with one I loved, two and thirty
 years ago.
 All along the valley, while I walked to-
 day,
 The two and thirty years were a mist that
 rolls away;
 For along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
 Thy living voice to me was as the voice of
 the dead;
 And all along the valley, by rock and cave
 and tree,
 The voice of the dead was a living voice
 to me.

MILTON

(ALCAICS)

(1863)

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,
 O skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,—
 Milton, a name to resound for ages;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm,—as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-
 woods
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

THE FLOWER

(1864)

Once in a golden hour
 I cast to earth a seed:
 Up there came a flower,—
 The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
 Through my garden-bower;
 And, muttering discontent,
 Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
 It wore a crown of light;
 But thieves from o'er the wall
 Stole the seed by night,—

Sowed it far and wide
 By every town and tower,
 Till all the people cried,
 "Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable:
 He that runs may read.
 Most can raise the flowers now,
 For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
 And some are poor indeed:
 And now again the people
 Call it but a weed.

A DEDICATION

(1864)

Dear, near and true — no truer Time him-
 self
 Can prove you, though he make you ever-
 more
 Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
 Shoots to the fall — take this, and pray
 that he
 Who wrote it, honoring your sweet faith
 in him, 5
 May trust himself; and after praise and
 scorn,
 As one who feels the immeasurable world,
 Attain the wise indifference of the wise;
 And after autumn past — if left to pass
 His autumn into seeming-leafless days — 10
 Draw toward the long frost and longest
 night,
 Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the
 fruit
 Which in our winter woodland looks a
 flower.

From BALIN AND BALAN

(1885)

The Fire of Heaven

But now the wholesome music of the
 wood 430
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of
 Mark,
 A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode
 The woodland alleys, — Vivien, with her
 squire:

"The fire of heaven has killed the barren
 cold,
 And kindled all the plain and all the
 world; 435
 The new leaf ever pushes off the old:
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

"Old priest, who mumble worship in your
 quire, —
 Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's
 desire,
 Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire! 440
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

"The fire of heaven is on the dusty ways,
 The wayside blossoms open to the blaze;
 The whole wood-world is one full peal of
 praise:
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell. 445

"The fire of heaven is lord of all things
 good,
 And starve not thou this fire within thy
 blood,
 But follow Vivien through the fiery flood!
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell!"

Then turning to her squire, "This fire of
 heaven, 450
 This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,
 And beat the Cross to earth, and break the
 King
 And all his Table."

GUINEVERE

(1859)

Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and
 sat
 There in the holy house at Almesbury
 Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
 A novice. One low light betwixt them
 burned
 Blurred by the creeping mist; for all
 abroad, 5
 Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
 The white mist, like a face-cloth to the
 face,
 Clung to the dead earth; and the land was
 still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of
 flight
 Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast 10
 Lay couchant with his eyes upon the
 throne,
 Ready to spring, waiting a chance. For
 this

He chilled the popular praises of the King
 With silent smiles of slow disparagement;
 And tampered with the Lords of the
 White Horse, 15
 Heathen, the brood of Hengist left; and
 sought
 To make disruption in the Table Round
 Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
 Serving his traitorous end; and all his
 aims
 Were sharpened by strong hate for Lancelot. 20

For thus it chanced one morn when all
 the court,
 Green-suited, but with plumes that mocked
 the may,
 Had been — their wont — a-maying and
 returned,
 That Modred still in green, all ear and
 eye,
 Climbed to the high top of the garden-
 wall 25
 To spy some secret scandal if he might;
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her
 best
 Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court
 The williest and the worst. And more
 than this
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing
 by 30
 Spied where he couched, and as the garden-
 dener's hand
 Picks from the colewort a green cater-
 pillar,
 So from the high wall and the flowering
 grove
 Of grasses Lancelot plucked him by the
 heel,
 And cast him as a worm upon the way. 35
 But when he knew the prince though
 marred with dust,
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,
 Made such excuses as he might, and these
 Full knightly without scorn. For in those
 days
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in
 scorn; 40

But, if a man were halt, or 'hunched, in
 him
 By those whom God had made full-limbed
 and tall,
 Scorn was allowed as part of his defect,
 And he was answered softly by the King
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot
 help 45
 To raise the prince, who rising twice or
 thrice
 Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled,
 and went;
 But, ever after, the small violence done
 Rankled in him, and ruffled all his heart,
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all day
 long 50
 A little bitter pool about a stone
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
 This matter to the Queen, at first she
 laughed
 Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall;
 Then shuddered, as the village wife who
 cries, 55
 "I shudder, some one steps across my
 grave;"
 Then laughed again, but faintlier, for in-
 deed
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
 Would track her guilt until he found, and
 hers
 Would be for evermore a name of
 scorn. 60
 Henceforward rarely could she front in
 hall,
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
 Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent
 eye.
 Henceforward too, the Powers that tend
 the soul,
 To help it from the death that cannot
 die, 65
 And save it even in extremes, began
 To vex and plague her. Many a time for
 hours,
 Beside the placid breathings of the King,
 In the dead night, grim faces came and
 went

Before her, or a vague spiritual fear, — 70
 Like to some doubtful noise of creaking
 doors,
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
 That keeps the rust of murder on the
 walls, —
 Held her awake. Or if she slept she
 dreamed
 An awful dream, for then she seemed to
 stand 75
 On some vast plain before a setting sun,
 And from the sun there swiftly made at
 her
 A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
 Before it till it touched her, and she
 turned —
 When lo! her own, that broadening from
 her feet, 80
 And blackening, swallowed all the land,
 and in it
 Far cities burnt; and with a cry she woke.
 And all this trouble did not pass but grew,
 Till even the clear face of the guileless
 King,
 And trustful courtesies of household
 life, 85
 Became her bane; and at the last she
 said:
 "O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own
 land,
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
 And if we meet again some evil chance
 Will make the smouldering scandal break
 and blaze 90
 Before the people and our lord the King."
 And Lancelot ever promised, but remained,
 And still they met and met. Again she
 said,
 "O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee
 hence."
 And then they were agreed upon a
 night — 95
 When the good King should not be there
 — to meet
 And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they
 met
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to
 eye,

Low on the border of her couch they
 sat 100
 Stammering and staring. It was their last
 hour,
 A madness of farewells. And Modred
 brought
 His creatures to the basement of the tower
 For testimony; and crying with full voice,
 "Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,"
 aroused 105
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
 Leapt on him, and hurled him headlong,
 and he fell
 Stunned, and his creatures took and bare
 him off,
 And all was still. Then she, "The end is
 come,
 And I am shamed for ever;" and he
 said: 110
 "Mine be the shame, mine was the sin;
 but rise,
 And fly to my strong castle over-seas.
 There will I hide thee till my life shall
 end,
 There hold thee with my life against the
 world."

She answered: "Lancelot, wilt thou hold
 me so? 115
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our fare-
 wells.
 Would God that thou couldst hide me
 from myself!
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and
 thou
 Unwedded; yet rise now, and let us fly,
 For I will draw me into sanctuary, 120
 And bide my doom." So Lancelot got her
 horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
 And then they rode to the divided way,
 There kissed, and parted weeping; for he
 past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen, 125
 Back to his land; but she to Almesbury
 Fled all night long by glimmering waste
 and weald,

And heard the spirits of the waste and
weald

Moan as she fled, or thought she heard
them moan.

And in herself she moaned, "Too late, too
late!" 130

Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
morn,

A blot in heaven, the raven, flying high,
Croaked, and she thought, "He spies a
field of death;

For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the
court, 135

Begin to slay the folk and spoil the land."

And when she came to Almesbury she
spake

There to the nuns, and said, "Mine ene-
mies

Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive and yield me sanctuary, nor ask 140
Her name to whom ye yield it till her time
To tell you"; and her beauty, grace, and
power

Wrought as a charm upon them, and they
spared

To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode

For many a week, unknown, among the
nuns, 145

Nor with them mixed, nor told her name,
nor sought,

Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for
shriff;

But communed only with the little maid,
Who pleased her with a babbling heedless-
ness

Which often lured her from herself. But
now, 150

This night, a rumor wildly blown about
Came that Sir Modred had usurped the
realm

And leagued him with the heathen, while
the King

Was waging war on Lancelot. Then she
thought,

"With what a hate the people and the
King 155

Must hate me," and bowed down upon her
hands

Silent, until the little maid, who brooked
No silence, brake it, uttering "Late! so
late!

What hour, I wonder now?" and when she
drew

No answer, by and by began to hum 160

An air the nuns had taught her: "Late, so
late!"

Which when she heard, the Queen looked
up, and said,

"O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may
weep."

Whereat full willingly sang the little
maid: 165

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and
chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we; for that we do repent,
And learning this, the bridegroom will
relent. 170

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light! so late! and dark and chill the
night!

O, let us in, that we may find the light!

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so
sweet? 175

O, let us in, though late, to kiss his feet!

No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

So sang the novice, while full passion-
ately,

Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came, wept
the sad Queen. 180

Then said the little novice prattling to
her:

"O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words—the words of one so
small,

Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,

And if I do not, there is penance
 given — 185
 Comfort your sorrows, for they do not
 flow
 From evil done; right sure am I of that,
 Who see your tender grace and stateli-
 ness.
 But weigh your sorrows with our lord the
 King's,
 And weighing find them less; for gone is
 he 190
 To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot
 there,
 Round that strong castle where he holds
 the Queen;
 And Modred whom he left in charge of
 all,
 The traitor — Ah, sweet lady, the King's
 grief
 For his own self, and his own Queen, and
 realm, 195
 Must needs be thrice as great as any of
 ours!
 For me, I thank the saints, I am not
 great;
 For if there ever come a grief to me
 I cry my cry in silence, and have done;
 None knows it, and my tears have brought
 me good. 200
 But even were the griefs of little ones
 As great as those of great ones, yet this
 grief
 Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
 That, howsoever much they may desire
 Silence, they cannot weep behind a
 cloud; 205
 As even here they talk at Almesbury
 About the good King and his wicked
 Queen,
 And were I such a King with such a
 Queen,
 Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
 But were I such a King it could not
 be." 210

Then to her own sad heart muttered the
 Queen,
 "Will the child kill me with her innocent
 talk?"

But openly she answered, "Must not I,
 If this false traitor have displaced his
 lord,
 Grieve with the common grief of all the
 realm?" 215

"Yea," said the maid, "this all is
 woman's grief,
 That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life
 Hath wrought confusion in the Table
 Round
 Which good King Arthur founded, years
 ago,
 With signs and miracles and wonders,
 there 220
 At Camelot, ere the coming of the
 Queen."

Then thought the Queen within herself
 again,
 "Will the child kill me with her foolish
 prate?"
 But openly she spake and said to her,
 "O little maid, shut in by nunnery
 walls, 225
 What canst thou know of Kings and
 Tables Round,
 Or what of signs and wonders, but the
 signs
 And simple miracles of thy nunnery?"

To whom the little novice garrulously:
 "Yea, but I know: the land was full of
 signs 230
 And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
 So said my father, and himself was knight
 Of the great Table — at the founding of
 it,
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse; and he
 said
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe
 twain 235
 After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
 Strange music, and he paused, and turning
 — there,
 All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
 Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
 And with a wild sea-light about his
 feet, 240

He saw them—headland after headland
flame

Far on into the rich heart of the west:
And in the light the white mermaiden
swam,

And strong man-breasted things stood
from the sea,

And sent a deep sea-voice through all the
land, 245

To which the little elves of chasm and
cleft

Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit
woods,

Himself beheld three spirits mad with
joy 250

Come dashing down on a tall wayside
flower,

That shook beneath them as the thistle
shakes

When three gray linnets wrangle for the
seed.

And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheeled and
broke 255

Flying, and linked again, and wheeled and
broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the
hall; 260

And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dreamed; for every
knight

Had whatsoever meat he longed for served
By hands unseen; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merrybloomed things 265
Shouldered the spigot, straddling on the
butts

While the wine ran; so glad were spirits
and men

Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen and somewhat
bitterly,

"Were they so glad? Ill prophets were
they all, 270

Spirits and men. Could none of them
foresee,

Not even thy wise father with his signs
And wonders, what has fallen upon the
realm?"

To whom the novice garrulously again:
"Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father
said, 275

Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Between the steep cliff and the coming
wave;

And many a mystic lay of life and death
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-
tops, 280

When round him bent the spirits of the
hills

With all their dewy hair blown back like
flame.

So said my father—and that night the
bard

Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the
King

As wellnigh more than man, and railed at
those 285

Who called him the false son of Gorlois.
For there was no man knew from whence
he came;

But after tempest, when the long wave
broke

All down the thundering shores of Bude
and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and
then 290

They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea;

And that was Arthur; and they fostered
him

Till he by miracle was approven King.
And that his grave should be a mystery 295

From all men, like his birth; and could he
find

A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then,—he
sang,—

The twain together well might change the
world.

But even in the middle of his song 300

He faltered, and his hand fell from the harp,
 And pale he turned, and reeled, and would have fallen,
 But that they stayed him up; nor would he tell
 His vision; but what doubt that he fore-saw
 This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?" 305

Then thought the Queen, "Lo! they have set her on,
 Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,
 To play upon me;" and bowed her head nor spake.
 Whereat the novice crying, with clasped hands,
 Shame on her own garrulity garrulously, 310
 Said the good nuns would check her gad-dling tongue
 Full often: "and, sweet lady, if I seem
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
 Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
 Which my good father told me, check me too, 315
 Nor let me shame my father's memory,—one
 Of noblest manners, though himself would say
 Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,
 Killed in a tilt, come next, five summers back,
 And left me; but of others who remain, 320
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy—
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss—
 But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King?"

Then the pale Queen looked up and answered her: 325
 "Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
 Was gracious to all ladies; and the same
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage; and the King

In open battle or the tilting-field 330
 Forbore his own advantage; and these two
 Were the most nobly-mannered men of all:
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit
 Of loyal nature and of noble mind."

"Yea," said the maid, "be manners such fair fruit? 335
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold
 Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
 The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the Queen:
 "O, closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls, 340
 What knowest thou of the world and all its lights
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire, 345
 And weep for her who drew him to his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for both;
 But I should all as soon believe that his,
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be 350
 Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
 Whom she would soothe, and harmed where she would heal;
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried: 355
 "Such as thou art be never maiden more

For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague
And play upon and harry me, petty spy
And traitress!" When that storm of anger
brake

From Guinevere, aghast the maiden
rose, 360
White as her veil; and stood before the
Queen

As tremulously as foam upon the beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly;
And when the Queen had added, "Get
thee hence!"

Fled frightened. Then that other left
alone 365

Sighed, and began to gather heart again,
Saying in herself: "The simple, fearful
child

Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful
guilt,

Simpler than any child, betrays itself.

But help me, Heaven, for surely I repent!
370

For what is true repentance but in
thought—

Not even in inmost thought to think again
The sins that made the past so pleasant to
us?

And I have sworn never to see him more,
To see him more."

And even in saying this, 375

Her memory from old habit of the mind
Went slipping back upon the golden days
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot
came,

Reputed the best knight and goodliest
man,

Ambassador, to yield her to his lord 380
Arthur, and led her forth. And far ahead

Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure,—for
the time

Was maytime, and as yet no sin was
dreamed,— 385

Rode under groves that looked a paradise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth

That seemed the heavens upbreking
through the earth;

And on from hill to hill, and every day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale 390

The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose

By couriers gone before; and on again,
Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship, 395

That crowned the state pavilion of the
King,

Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such
a trance,

And moving through the past uncon-
sciously,

Came to that point where first she saw
the King 400

Ride toward her from the city, sighed to
find

Her journey done, glanced at him, thought
him cold,

High, self-contained, and passionless, not
like him,

"Not like my Lancelot"—while she
brooded thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
again, 405

There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
A murmuring whisper through the nun-
nery ran,

Then on a sudden a cry, "The King!" She
sat

Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed
feet

Through the long gallery from the outer
doors 410

Rang coming, prone from off her seat she
fell,

And grovelled with her face against the
floor.

There with her milk-white arms and shad-
owy hair

She made her face a darkness from the
King,

And in the darkness heard his armed
feet 415

Pause by her; then came silence; then a
voice,

Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but, though changed,
the King's:

"Liest thou here so low, the child of one
I honored, — happy, dead before thy
shame? 420

Well is it that no child is born of thee.
The children born of thee are sword and
fire,

Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred; and the godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern
Sea; 425

Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right
arm,

The mightiest of my knights, abode with
me,

Have everywhere about this land of Christ
In twelve great battles ruining over-
thrown.

And knowest thou now from whence I
come — from him, 430

From waging bitter war with him; and
he,

That did not shun to smite me in worse
way,

Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
He spared to lift his hand against the
King

Who made him knight. But many a knight
was slain; 435

And many more, and all his kith and kin,
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.
And many more when Modred raised re-
volt,

Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave
To Modred; and a remnant stays with
me. 440

And of this remnant will I leave a part,
True men who love me still, for whom I
live,

To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be
harm'd.

Fear not; thou shalt be guarded till my
death. 445

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies

Have erred not, that I march to meet my
doom.

Thou hast not made my life so sweet to
me,

That I the King should greatly care to
live;

For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my
life. 450

"Bear with me for the last time while I
show,

Even for thy sake, the sin which thou hast
sinned.

For when the Romans left us, and their
law

Relaxed its hold upon us, and the ways
Were filled with rapine, here and there a
deed 455

Of prowess done redressed a random
wrong.

But I was first of all the kings who drew
The knighthood-errant of this realm and
all

The realms together under me, their
Head,

In that fair Order of my Table
Round, — 460

A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world,
And be the fair beginning of a time.

I made them lay their hands in mine and
swear

To reverence the King, as if he were 465
Their conscience, and their conscience as
their King;

To break the heathen and uphold the
Christ;

To ride abroad redressing human wrongs;
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it;

To honor his own word as if his God's; 470
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity;

To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,

Until they won her; for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven 475

Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,

But teach high thought, and amiable
words

And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a
man. 480

And all this throve before I wedded thee,
Believing, 'Lo, mine helpmate, one to feel
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy!'
Then came thy shameful sin with Lance-
lot;

Then came the sin of Tristram and
Isolt; 485

Then others, following these my mightiest
knights,

And drawing foul ensample from fair
names,

Sinned also, till the loathsome opposite
Of all my heart had destined did obtain;
And all through thee!

"So that this life of mine 490
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and
wrong, —

Not greatly care to lose; but rather think
How sad it were for Arthur, should he
live,

To sit once more within his lonely hall,
And miss the wonted number of my
knights, 495

And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
As in the golden days before thy sin.

For which of us who might be left could
speak

Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at
thee?

And in thy bowers of Camelot or of
Usk 500

Thy shadow still would glide from room
to room,

And I should evermore be vexed with thee
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,

Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
For think not, though thou wouldst not

love thy lord, 505

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
I am not made of so slight elements.

Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy
shame.

I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who either for his own or children's
sake, 510

To save his blood from scandal, lets the
wife

Whom he knows false abide and rule the
house;

For being through his cowardice allowed
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to
men, 515

Creeps, no precaution used, among the
crowd;

Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and
saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the
pulse

With devil's leaps, and poisons half the
young.

Worst of the worst were that man he that
reigns! 520

Better the King's waste hearth and aching
heart

Than thou reseatd in thy place of light,
The mockery of my people and their
bane!"

He paused, and in the pause she crept
an inch

Nearer, and laid her hands about his
feet. 525

Far off a solitary trumpet blew;

Then, waiting by the doors, the war-horse
neighed

As at a friend's voice; and he spake again:

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy
crimes;

I did not come to curse thee, Guine-
vere, — 530

I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,

My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on

that fierce law,

The doom of treason and the flaming
death, — 535

When first I learnt thee hidden here, — is
past.

The pang, — which, while I weighed thy
heart with one

Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,

Made my tears burn,— is also past,— in
part.

And all is past, the sin is sinned; and I, 540
Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God

Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the
rest.

But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded
form, 545

And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with
thee—

I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
But Lancelot's; nay, they never were the
King's.

I cannot take thy hand; that too is
flesh, 550

And in the flesh thou hast sinned; and
mine own flesh,

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,
"I loathe thee." Yet not less, O Guine-
vere,—

For I was ever virgin save for thee,—
My love through flesh hath wrought into
my life 555

So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee
still.

"Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father
Christ,

Hereafter in that world where all are
pure 560

We two may meet before high God; and
thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and
know

I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me
that,

I charge thee, my last hope. Now must
I hence. 565

Through the thick night I hear the trumpet
blow.

They summon me their King to lead mine
hosts

Far down to that great battle in the west,

Where I must strike against the man they
call

My sister's son—no kin of mine; who
leagues 570

With Lords of the White Horse, heathen,
and knights,

Traitors—and strike him dead; and meet
myself

Death, or I know not what mysterious
doom.

And thou remaining here wilt learn the
event;

But hither shall I never come again, 575
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more—
Farewell!"

And while she grovelled at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her
neck;

And in the darkness, o'er her fallen head,
Perceived the waving of his hands that
blest. 580

Then, listening till those armèd steps
were gone,

Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish
found

The casement: "peradventure," so she
thought,

"If I might see his face, and not be seen."
And lo, he sat on horseback at the
door! 585

And near him the sad nuns with each a
light

Stood, and he gave them charge about the
Queen,

To guard and foster her for evermore.
And while he spake to these his helm was
lowered,

To which for crest the golden dragon
clung 590

Of Britain; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's; but she
saw,

Wet with the mists and smitten by the
lights,

The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
Blaze, making all the night a steam of
fire. 595

And even then he turned; and more and more

The moony vapor rolling round the King,
Who seemed the phantom of a giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray

And grayer, till himself became as mist 600
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretched out her arms and
cried aloud,

"O Arthur!" — there her voice brake suddenly,

Then, — as a stream that spouting from a cliff

Falls in mid air, but gathering at the base 605

Remakes itself, and flashes down the vale, —

Went on in passionate utterance:

"Gone — my lord!

Gone through my sin to slay and to be slain!

And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answered his farewell. 610

His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,

My own true lord! How dare I call him mine?

The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution. He, the King,

Called me polluted. Shall I kill myself? 615

What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul, nor can I kill my shame;
No, nor by living can I live it down.

The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,

The months will add themselves and make the years, 620

The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.

I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Let the world be; that is but of the world.

What else? what hope? I think there was a hope, 625

Except he mocked me when he spake of hope;

His hope he called it; but he never mocks,
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.

And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven

My wickedness to him, and left me hope 630

That in mine own heart I can live down sin,

And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God! Ah great and gentle lord,

Who wast as is the conscience of a saint
Among his warring senses, to thy knights — 635

To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took

Full easily all impressions from below,
Would not look up, or half-despised the height

To which I would not or I could not climb —

I thought I could not breathe in that fine air, 640

That pure severity of perfect light —
I yearned for warmth and color, which I found

In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou art,

Thou art the highest and most human too,
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none 645

Will tell the King I love him though so late?

Now — ere he goes to the great battle? none!

Myself must tell him in that purer life,
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world, 650

Had I but loved thy highest creature here?

It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known;
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.

We needs must love the highest when we
see it, — 655
Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand
Grasped made her vail her eyes. She
looked and saw
The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to
her,
"Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?"
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns 660
All round her, weeping; and her heart was
loosed
Within her, and she wept with these and
said:

"Ye know me then, that wicked one,
who broke
The vast design and purpose of the King.
O, shut me round with narrowing nun-
nery-walls, 665
Meek maidens, from the voices crying,
"Shame!"

I must not scorn myself; he loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me
still.

So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with
you; 670

Wear black and white, and be a nun like
you;

Fast with your fasts, not feasting with
your feasts;

Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at
your joys,

But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;
Pray and be prayed for; lie before your
shrines; 675

Do each low office of your holy house;
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute
dole

To poor sick people, — richer in His eyes
Who ransomed us, and haler, too, than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts, and heal
mine own; 680

And so wear out in almsdeed and in
prayer

The sombre close of that voluptuous day
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the
King."

She said. They took her to themselves;
and she
Still hoping, fearing, "Is it yet too
late?" 685
Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess
died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure
life,
And for the power of ministration in her,
And likewise for the high rank she had
borne,
Was chosen abbess; there, an abbess,
lived 690
For three brief years; and there, an ab-
bess, past
To where beyond these voices there is
peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

(1834, 1842, 1869)

That story which the bold Sir Bedivere, —
First made, and latest left, of all the
knights, —

Told, when the man was no more than a
voice

In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other
minds. 5

For on their march to westward, Bedi-
vere,

Who slowly paced among the slumbering
host,

Heard in his tent the moanings of the
King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I marked Him in the flowering of His
fields, 10

But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and
die.

O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he
would, 15

Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?

Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
 But that these eyes of men are dense and
 dim,
 And have not power to see it as it is, — 20
 Perchance, because we see not to the
 close:
 For I, being simple, thought to work His
 will,
 And have but stricken with the sword in
 vain,
 And all whereon I leaned in wife and
 friend
 Is traitor to my peace; and all my
 realm 25
 Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
 My God, thou hast forgotten me in my
 death!
 Nay — God my Christ — I pass but shall
 not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in the
 west,
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain,
 killed 30
 In Lancelot's war, — the ghost of Gawain
 blown
 Along a wandering wind, — and past his
 ear
 Went shrilling: "Hollow, hollow all de-
 light!
 Hail, King! tomorrow thou shalt pass
 away.
 Farewell! there is an isle of rest for
 thee. 35
 And I am blown along a wandering wind,
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!"
 And fainter onward, like wild birds that
 change
 Their season in the night and wail their
 way
 From cloud to cloud, down the long wind
 the dream 40
 Shrilled; but in going mingled with dim
 cries
 Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
 As of some lonely city sacked by night,
 When all is lost, and wife and child with
 wail

Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and
 called: 45
 "Who spake? A dream. O, light upon
 the wind,
 Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are these
 dim cries
 Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste
 and wild
 Mourn, knowing it will go along with
 me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and
 spake: 50
 "O me, my King, let pass whatever will, —
 Elves, and the harmless glamor of the
 field;
 But in their stead thy name and glory
 cling
 To all high places like a golden cloud
 For ever; but as yet thou shalt not pass. 55
 Light was Gawain in life, and light in
 death
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
 And care not thou for dreams from him,
 but rise —
 I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
 And with him many of thy people, and
 knights 60
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but
 grosser grown
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows and
 thee.
 Right well in heart they know thee for
 the King.
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-
 vere: 65
 "Far other is this battle in the west
 Whereto we move than when we strove
 in youth,
 And brake the petty kings, and fought with
 Rome,
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman
 wall,
 And shook him through the north. Ill
 doom is mine 70
 To war against my people and my knights.

The king who fights his people fights himself.

And they my knights, who loved me
once — the stroke

That strikes them dead is as my death to me.

Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way 75
Through this blind haze which, ever since
I saw

One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host
by night;

And ever pushed Sir Modred, league by
league, 80

Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse —
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples
dwelt,

And the long mountains ended in a coast 85
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more;
And he that fled, no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light
of heaven 90

Burned at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they
closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the
west.

A death-white mist slept over sand and
sea, 95

Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it,
drew

Down with his blood, till all his heart was
cold

With formless fear; and even on Arthur
fell

Confusion, since he saw not whom he
fought.

For friend and foe were shadows in the
mist, 100

And friend slew friend not knowing whom
he slew;

And some had visions out of golden youth,

And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the
mist

Was many a noble deed, many a base, 105
And chance and craft and strength in
single fights;

And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard
mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,
the crash

Of battle-axes on shattered helmets, and
shrieks 110

After the Christ, of those who falling
down

Looked up for heaven, and only saw the
mist;

And shouts of heathen and the traitor
knights,

Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,

Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the
lungs 115

In that close mist, and cryings for the
light,

Moans of the dying, and voices of the
dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed after
wail

Of suffering, silence follows, or through
death

Or death-like swoon, — thus over all that
shore, 120

Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous
day

Grew drearier toward twilight falling,
came

A bitter wind, clear from the north, and
blew

The mist aside; and with that wind the
tide 125

Rose, and the pale King glanced across the
field

Of battle. But no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen: only the wan wave

Brake in among dead faces, to and fro 130

Swaying the helpless hands, and up and
down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shivered brands that once had fought
with Rome;
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to
be. 135

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-
vere, —
And whiter than the mist that all day
long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

“Hearest thou this great voice that
shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we
move, 140
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as though they had not died
for me? —
O Bedivere, — for on my heart hath fallen
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be
king: 145
Behold, I seem but king among the dead.”

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: “My
King!
King everywhere! and so the dead have
kinds,
There also will I worship thee as king.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I
live 150
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that
brought
The heathen back among us, yonder
stands,
Modred, unharmed, the traitor of thine
house.”

Then spake the King: “My house hath
been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my
house 155
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with
me.

My house are rather they who swear my
vows, —
Yea, even while they brake them, owned
me king.
And well for thee, saying in my dark
hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath
failed, 160
That quick or dead thou holdest me for
king.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou
see
Yet, ere I pass.” And uttering this the
King
Made at the man. Then Modred smote
his liege 165
Hard on that helm which many a heathen
sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one
blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and, all but slain himself, he
fell.

So all day long the noise of battle
rolled 170
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was
deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him, 175
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was
full. 180

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-
vere:
“The sequel of today unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a
sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think
that we 185
Shall never more, at any future time,

Delight our souls with talk of knightly
deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made, — 190
Though Merlin sware that I should come
again
To rule once more — but let what will be,
be:
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Ex-
calibur, 195
Which was my pride; for thou remember-
est how
In those old days, one summer noon, an
arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-
ful,
Holding the sword — and how I rowed
across 200
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere; 205
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring
me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee
thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the
helm —
A little thing may harm a wounded
man; 210
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee
word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he
stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of
tombs;
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient
men, 215
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind
sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-
bur, 220
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the
hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond
sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
work 225
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he
stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed 230
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the
marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-
vere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I
gave? 235
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint
and pale: 240
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy
name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere. 245
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the
thing
I bade thee; watch, and lightly bring me
word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second
time 250
Across the ridge, and paced beside the
mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he
smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud: 255

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the
earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of
many men.
What good should follow this, if this were
done? 260
What harm, undone? Deep harm to dis-
obey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king de-
mand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he
does. 265

What record or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this
kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty
kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of
arms, 270
Saying: "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the
Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the
deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the after-
time 275

To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were
lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own con-
ceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded
King. 280

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing
heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the
reeds." 285

To whom replied King Arthur, much in
wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye 290
That bowed the will. I see thee what
thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious
hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl 295
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee
hence;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my
hands." 300

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and
ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutched the
sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the
moon, 305
And flashing round and round, and whirled
in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter
shock
By night, with noises of the Northern
Sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excali-
bur; 310
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-
ful,
And caught him by the hilt, and bran-
dished him
Three times, and drew him under in the
mere.
And lightly went the other to the King. 315

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing
thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or
seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the
gems 320
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal
men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-
ing him; 325
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-
ful,
That caught him by the hilt, and bran-
dished him
Three times, and drew him under in the
mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breath-
ing hard: 330
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were
gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall
die."

So saying, from the pavement he half
rose, 335
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not
words; 340
Then took with care, and kneeling on one
knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid
hands,
And rising bore him through the place of
tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted
hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his
bed 345
When all the house is mute. So sighed the
King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
"Quick quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to
ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walked, 350
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like
a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and
right 355
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as
he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
heels—
And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter
moon! 360

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
 barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
 stern,
 Beneath them; and descending they were
 ware
 That all the decks were dense with stately
 forms,
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream —
 by these, 365
 Three queens with crowns of gold — and
 from them rose
 A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
 And, as it were one voice, an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
 All night in a waste land, where no one
 comes, 370
 Or hath come, since the making of the
 world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in
 the barge."
 So to the barge they came. There those
 three queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the King,
 and wept.
 But she that rose the tallest of them all, 375
 And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
 And loosed the shattered casque, and
 chafed his hands,
 And called him by his name, complaining
 loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against a brow
 Striped with dark blood; for all his face
 was white 380
 And colorless, and like the withered moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing
 east;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dashed
 with drops
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous
 curls, —
 That made his forehead like a rising sun 385
 High from the dais-throne, — were parched
 with dust,
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
 Mixt with the knightly growth that fringed
 his lips.
 So like a shattered column lay the King;

Not like that Arthur who, with lance in
 rest, 390
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,
 Shot through the lists at Camelot, and
 charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I
 go? 395
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my
 eyes?
 For now I see the true old times are dead,
 When every morning brought a noble
 chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble
 knight.
 Such times have been not since the light
 that led 400
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole Round Table is dis-
 solved
 Which was an image of the mighty world;
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the
 years, 405
 Among new men, strange faces, other
 minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the
 barge:
 "The old order changeth, yielding place to
 new,
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the
 world. 410
 Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have
 done
 May He within himself make pure! But
 thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are
 wrought by prayer 415
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,
 let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
 But what are men better than sheep or
 goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer 420

Both for themselves and those who call
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of
God.

But now farewell. I am going a long
way

With these thou seest—if indeed I go— 425
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt—
To the island-valley of Avilion;

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard
lawns, 430

And bowery hollows crowned with summer
sea;

Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and
sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death, 435
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the
flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedi-
vere

Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of
dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away. 440

But when that moan had past for ever-
more,

The stillness of the dead world's winter
dawn

Amazed him, and he groaned, "The King is
gone."

And therewithal came on him the weird
rhyme,

"From the great deep to the great deep he
goes." 445

Whereat he slowly turned, and slowly
clomb

The last hard footstep of that iron crag;

Thence marked the black hull moving yet,
and cried:

"He passes to be king among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound 450
He comes again; but—if he come no
more—

O me, be yon dark queens in yon black
boat,

Who shrieked and wailed, the three
whereat we gazed

On that high day, when, clothed with living
light,

They stood before his throne in silence,
friends 455

Of Arthur, who should help him at his
need?"

Then from the dawn it seemed there
came, but faint

As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one
voice 460

Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and
clomb

Even to the highest he could climb, and
saw,

Straining his eyes beneath an arch of
hand,—

Or thought he saw,—the speck that bare
the King, 465

Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less, and vanish into light.

And the new sun rose, bringing the new
year.

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

(1864)

Wheer 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin
'ere aloän?

Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse: whoy,
Doctor's abeän an' agoän—

Says that I moänt 'a naw moor ääle; but I
beänt a fool;

Git ma my ääle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to
break my rule.

Doctors,—they knaws nowt, fur a says
what's nawways true: 5

Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the
things that a do.

I've 'ed my point of ääle ivry noight sin' I
beän 'ere;

An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight
for foorty year.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' ere
o' my bed.

"The Amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issèn,
my friend," a said; 10

An' a tow'd ma my sins, an' 's toithe were
due, an' I gied it in hond:

I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy
the lond.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa
mooch to larn.

But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy
Marris's barne.

Thaw a knaws I hallus voätèd wi' Squoire
an' choorch an' staäte, 15

An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin
the raäte.

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor
moy Sally wur deäd,

An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a
buzzard-clock ower my 'eäd;

An' I niver know'd whot a meäned, but I
thowt a 'ad summut to saäy;

An' I thowt a said whot a ow't to 'a said,
an' I coomed awaäy. 20

Bessy Marris's barnel tha knaws she laäid
it to meä—

Mowt a beän, mayhap; for she wur a bad
un, sheä.

'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha
mun understand:

I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy
the lond.

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says
it eäsy an' freeä: 25

"The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issèn,
my friend," says 'eä.

I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun
said it in 'aäste;

But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a
stubbed Thurnaby waäste.

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass? Naw,
naw,—tha was not born then.

Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um
mysèn,— 30

Moäst loike a butter-bump, fur I 'eärd 'um
about an' about;

But I stubbed 'um oop wi' the lot, an'
raäved an' rembled 'um out.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer
a-laäid of 'is faäce

Down i' the woidl 'enemies, afoor I coomed
to the plaäce.

Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner 'ed shot 'um
as deäd as a naäil: 35

Noäks wur 'anged for it oop at 'soize—
but git ma my ääle.

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't
not feeäd for a cow,—

Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz: an'
looök at it now—

Warn't worth nowt a haäcre; an' now
theer 's lots o' feeäd,—

Fourscoor yows upon it, an' some on it
down i' seeäd. 40

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meäned to
'a stubb'd it at fall,—

Done it ta-year, I meäned, an' runned plow
thruff it an' all,

If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let
ma aloän,—

Me, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o'
Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

Do Godamoighty know what a's doing,
a-taäkin' o' mea? 45

I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän, an' yon-
der a pea;

An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a'
dear, a' dear!

And I 'a managed for Squire coom
Michaelmas thutty year.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a
aäpoth o' sense;

Or a mowt a' taäen young Robins — a
niver mended a fence: 50

But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä, an'
taäke ma now, —

Wi' aäf the cows to cauve, an' Thurnaby
hoälms to plow!

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs
ma a passin' boy, —

Says to thessèn, naw doubt, "What a man
a beä, sewer-loyl!"

Fur they knows what I beän to Squire
sin' fust a coom'd to the 'All: 55

I done moy duty by Squire an' I done moy
duty boy hall.

Squire 's i' Lunnon; an' summun, I
reckons, 'ull 'a to wroite;

For whoä 's to howd the lond ater meä, —
thot muddles ma quoit:

Sartin-sewer I beä thot a weänt niver give
it to Joänes;

Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver
rembles the stoäns. 60

But summun 'ull come ater meä, mayhap,
wi' 'is kittle o' steäm

Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi'
the Divil's oän teäm.

Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, — thaw loife,
they says, is sweet;

But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I
couldn abeär to see it.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn
bring ma the aäle? 65

Doctor 's a toättler, lass, an a's hallus i'
the owd taäle;

I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, — a knows
naw moor nor a floy:

Git ma my aäle, I tell tha, — an' if I mun
doy, I mun doy.

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

(1870)

Doesn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they
canters awaäy?

Proputty, proputty, proputty — that's what
I 'ears 'em saäy.

Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam, thou's
an ass for thy päins:

Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs, nor in
all thy brains.

Woä — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha,
Sam: yon 's parson's 'ouse — 5

Doesn't thou know that a man mun be
eäther a man or a mouse?

Time to think on it then; for thou'll be
twenty to weeäk.

Proputty, proputty — woä, then, woä: let
ma 'ear mysèn speäk.

Me an' thy 'muther, Sammy, 'as beän
a-talkin' o' thee:

Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she
beän a-tellin' it me. 10

Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's
sweet upo' parson's lass:

Noä, thou'll marry for luvv — an' we
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

Seeäd her todaäy goä by — Saäint's-daäy
— they was ringing the bells.

She's a beauty, thou thinks — an' soä is
scores o' gells.

Them as 'as munny an' all. — Wot's a
beauty? — the flower as blaws. 15

But proputty, proputty sticks; an' proputty,
proputty graws.

Do'ant be stunt; taäke time: I knows what
maäkes tha sa mad.

Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysèn
when I wur a lad?

But I knowed a Quaäker feller as often 'as
towd ma this:

"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä
wheer munny is!" 20

An' I went wheer munny war; an' thy
muther coom to 'and,

Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a nicetish
bit o' land.

Maäybe she warn't a beauty — I niver giv
it a thowt —

But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss
as a lass as 'ant nowt?

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a
nowt when 'e 's deäd, — 25

Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and
addle her breäd.

Why? Fur 'e 's nobbut a curate, an'
weänt niver get hissën clear;

An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on, afoor 'e
coomed to the shere.

An' thin 'e coomed to the parish wi' lots o'
Varsity debt, —

Stook to his taaïl, they did; an' 'e 'ant got
shut on 'em yet. 30

An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän
to lend 'im a shuvv, —

Woorse nor a far-weltered yowe: fur,
Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

Luvv? What's luvv? Thou can luvv thy
lass an' 'er munny too,

Maäkin' 'em goä togither, as they've good
right to do.

Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er
munny laaid by? 35

Naäy — fur I luvvd 'er a vast sight moor
fur it: reäson why.

Ay, an' thy muther says thou wants to
marry the lass,

Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth
on us thinks tha an ass —

Woä then, proputt, wiltha? — an ass as
near as mays nowt —

Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the bees is
as fell as owt. 40

Break me a bit 'o the esh for his 'eäd, lad,
out o' the fence! —

Gentleman burn! What's gentleman burn?
Is it shillins an' pence?

Proputt, proputt's, ivrything 'ere; an',
Sammy, I'm blest

If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, — fur
them as 'as it's the best.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as break into
'ouses an' steäls, — 45

Them as 'as coäts to their backs, an' taäkes
their regular meäls.

Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a
meäl's to be 'ad:

Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in
a loomp is bad.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a
beän a laäzy lot;

Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin', whin-
iver munny was got. 50

Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leastways, 'is
munny was 'id.

But 'e tued an' moiled issën deäd, an' 'e
died a good un, 'e did.

Loök thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck
cooms out by the 'ill!

Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs
oop to the mill;

An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll
live to see; 55

And if thou marries a good un, I'll leäve
the land to thee.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I
means to stick;

But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the
land to Dick. —

Coom oop, proputt, proputt — that's
what I 'ears 'im saäy —

Proputt, proputt, proputt — canter an'
canter awaäy. 60

WAGES

(1868)

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of
song,

Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on
an endless sea!

Glory of Virtue: to fight, to struggle, to
right the wrong —

Nay, but she aimed not at glory, no lover
of glory she:

Give her the glory of going on, and still
to be. 5

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of
Virtue be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the
life of the worm and the fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet
seats of the just, —

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in
a summer sky:

Give her the wages of going on, and not to
die. 10

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

(1869)

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the
hills and the plains, —

Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him
who reigns?

Is not the Vision He, though He be not
that which He seems?

Dreams are true while they last, and do
we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body
and limb, 5

Are they not sign and symbol of thy divi-
sion from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the
reason why,

For is He not all but that which has power
to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou
fulfillest thy doom

Making Him broken gleams and a stifled
splendor and gloom. 10

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and
Spirit with Spirit can meet —

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer
than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise: O soul, and let
us rejoice,

For if He thunder by law the thunder is
yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says
the fool; 15

For all we have power to see is a straight
staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the
eye of man cannot see;

But if we could see and hear, this Vision
— were it not He?

ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

(1874)

O Thou, that sendest out the man

To rule by land and sea,

Strong mother of a Lion-line,

Be proud of those strong sons of thine

Who wrenched their rights from thee! 5

What wonder if in noble heat

Those men thine arms withstood,

Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,

And in thy spirit with thee fought, —

Who sprang from English blood! 10

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy:

Lift up thy rocky face,

And shatter, when the storms are black,

In many a streaming torrent back,

The seas that shock thy base! 15

Whatever harmonies of law

The growing world assume,

Thy work is thine — the single note

From that deep chord which Hampden
smote

Will vibrate to the doom. 20

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

(1874)

The voice and the Peak,

Far over summit and lawn:

The lone glow, and long roar

Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of
dawn!

All night have I heard the voice 5
 Rave over the rocky bar:
 But thou wert silent in heaven,
 Above thee glided the star.

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
 That standest high above all? — 10
 "I am the voice of the Peak:
 I roar and rave, for I fall.

"A thousand voices go
 To North, South, East, and West;
 They leave the heights and are troubled, 15
 And moan and sink to their rest.

"The fields are fair beside them,
 The chestnut towers in his bloom;
 But they — they feel the desire of the
 deep —
 Fall, and follow their doom. 20

"The deep has power on the height,
 And the height has power on the deep:
 They are raised for ever and ever,
 And sink again into sleep." —

Not raised for ever and ever; 25
 But when their cycle is o'er,
 The valley, the voice, the peak, the star
 Pass, and are found no more.

The Peak is high and flushed
 At his highest with sunrise fire; 30
 The Peak is high, and the stars are high,
 And the thought of a man is higher.

A deep below the deep,
 And a height beyond the height!
 Our hearing is not hearing, 35
 And our seeing is not sight.

The voice and the Peak
 Far into heaven withdrawn:
 The lone glow and long roar
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of
 dawn! 40

MILKMAID'S SONG

(From Queen Mary, 1875: Act III,
 Scene 5, line 53 ff)

Shame upon you, Robin,
 Shame upon you now!
 Kiss me would you? with my hands
 Milking the cow?
 Daisies grow again, 5
 Kingcups blow again,
 And you came and kissed me milking the
 cow.

Robin came behind me,
 Kissed me well, I vow.
 Cuff him could I? with my hands 10
 Milking the cow?
 Swallows fly again,
 Cuckoos cry again,
 And you came and kissed me milking the
 cow.

Come, Robin, Robin, 15
 Come and kiss me now;
 Help it can I? with my hands
 Milking the cow?
 Ringdoves coo again,
 All things woo again: 20
 Come behind, and kiss me milking the cow!

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET
 (1878)

I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Gren-
 ville lay,
 And a pinnacle, like a fluttered bird, came
 flying from far away:
 "Spanish ships of war at sea! we have
 sighted fifty-three!"
 Then sware Lord Thomas Howard:
 "'Fore God, I am no coward;
 But I cannot meet them here, for my ships
 are out of gear, 5

And the half my men are sick. I must fly,
but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line: can we fight
with fifty-three?"

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I
know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with
them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are
lying sick ashore. 10
I should count myself the coward if I left
them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devil-
doms of Spain."

III

So Lord Howard passed away with five
ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent
summer heaven.
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick
men from the land 15
Very carefully and slow, —
Men of Bideford in Devon, —
And we laid them on the ballast down
below:
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blessed him in their pain, that
they were not left to Spain, 20
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the
glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work
the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the
Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the
weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly? 25
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this
sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all
good English men.

Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the chil-
dren of the devil, 30
For I never turned my back upon Don or
devil yet."

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laughed, and we
roared a hurrah, and so
The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the
heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her
ninety sick below:
For half of their fleet to the right and half
to the left were seen, 35
And the little *Revenge* ran on through the
long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers looked down
from their decks and laughed,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at
the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delayed
By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of
fifteen hundred tons, 40
And up-shadowing high above us with her
yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we
stayed.

VII

And while now the great *San Philip* hung
above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud, 45
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon
the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them
all.

VIII

But anon the great *San Philip*, she be-
thought herself and went, 50
Having that within her womb that had left
her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and
they fought us hand to hand;

For a dozen times they came with their
 pikes and musqueteers,
 And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a
 dog that shakes his ears
 When he leaps from the water to the
 land. 55

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars
 came out far over the summer sea,
 But never a moment ceased the fight of the
 one and the fifty-three.
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, their
 high-built galleons came, —
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, with
 her battle-thunder and flame:
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew
 back with her dead and her shame. 60
 For some were sunk and many were shat-
 tered, and so could fight us no more —
 God of battles, was ever a battle like this
 in the world before?

X

For he said, "Fight on! fight on!"
 Though his vessel was all but a wreck;
 And it chanced that, when half of the short
 summer night was gone, 65
 With a grisly wound to be dressed he had
 left the deck,
 But a bullet struck him that was dressing
 it suddenly dead,
 And himself he was wounded again in the
 side and the head, —
 And he said, "Fight on! fight on!"

XI

And the night went down, and the sun
 smiled out far over the summer sea, 70
 And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay
 round us all in a ring;
 But they dared not touch us again, for they
 feared that we still could sting,
 So they watched what the end would be.
 And we had not fought them in vain,
 But in perilous plight were we, 75
 Seeing forty of our poor hundred were
 slain,

And half of the rest of us maimed for life
 In the crash of the cannonades and the
 desperate strife;
 And the sick men down in the hold were
 most of them stark and cold;
 And the pikes were all broken or bent, and
 the powder was all of it spent; 80
 And the masts and the rigging were lying
 over the side.
 But Sir Richard cried in his English
 pride:
 "We have fought such a fight for a day
 and a night
 As may never be fought again!
 We have won great glory, my men! 85
 And a day less or more
 At sea or ashore,
 We die — does it matter when?
 Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink
 her, split her in twain!
 Fall into the hands of God, not into the
 hands of Spain!" 90

XII

And the gunner said, "Ay, ay," but the
 seamen made reply:
 "We have children, we have wives,
 And the Lord hath spared our lives.
 We will make the Spaniard promise, if we
 yield, to let us go:
 We shall live to fight again and to strike
 another blow." 95
 And the lion there lay dying, and they
 yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flag-
 ship bore him then,
 Where they laid him by the mast, — old
 Sir Richard caught at last;
 And they praised him to his face with their
 courtly foreign grace.
 But he rose upon their decks, and he
 cried: 100
 "I have fought for Queen and Faith like a
 valiant man and true;
 I have only done my duty as a man is
 bound to do.

With a joyful spirit I, Sir Richard Gren-
ville, die!"

And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been
so valiant and true, 105

And had holden the power and glory of
Spain so cheap

That he dared her with one little ship and
his English few:

Was he devil or man? He was devil for
aught they knew,

But they sank his body with honor down
into the deep.

And they manned the *Revenge* with a
swarthier alien crew, 110

And away she sailed with her loss, and
longed for her own;

When a wind from the lands they had
ruined awoke from sleep,

And the water began to heave and the
weather to moan,

And or ever that evening ended a great
gale blew,

And a wave like the wave that is raised by
an earthquake grew, 115

Till it smote on their hulls and their sails
and their masts and their flags,

And the whole sea plunged and fell on the
shot-shattered navy of Spain:

And the little *Revenge* herself went down
by the island crags,

To be lost evermore in the main.

RIZPAH

17—

(1880)

I

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over
land and sea—

And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother,
come out to me!"

Why should he call me tonight, when he
knows that I cannot go?

For the downs are as bright as day, and
the full moon stares at the snow.

II

We should be seen, my dear: they would
spy us out of the town. 5

The loud black nights for us, and the
storm rushing over the down,—

When I cannot see my own hand, but am
led by the creak of the chain,

And grovel and grope for my son till I
find myself drenched with the rain.

III

Anything fallen again? Nay—what was
there left to fall?

I have taken them home, I have numbered
the bones, I have hidden them all. 10

What am I saying? and what are *you*? do
you come as a spy?

Falls? what falls? who knows? As the
tree falls, so must it lie.

IV

Who let her in? how long has she been?
You—what have you heard?

Why did you sit so quiet? You never
have spoken a word.

O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—
none of their spies— 15

But the night has crept into my heart, and
begun to darken my eyes.

V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what
should *you* know of the night,

The blast and the burning shame and the
bitter frost and the fright?

I have done it, while you were asleep—
you were only made for the day.

I have gathered my baby together—and
now you may go your way. 20

VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, madam, to sit
by an old dying wife.

But say nothing hard of my boy, I have
only an hour of life.

I kissed my boy in the prison, before he
went out to die.

"They dared me to do it," he said, and he never has told me a lie.

I whipped him for robbing an orchard once, when he was but a child: 25

"The farmer dared me to do it," he said. He was always so wild,—

And idle—and couldn't be idle,—my Willy: he never could rest.

The King should have made him a soldier: he would have been one of his best.

VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let him be good;

They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he would. 30

And he took no life; but he took one purse, and when all was done

He flung it among his fellows—"I'll none of it," said my son.

VIII

I came into court to the judge and the lawyers: I told them my tale,

God's own truth—but they killed him, they killed him for robbing the mail.

They hanged him in chains for a show—we had always borne a good name: 35

To be hanged for a thief—and then put away—isn't that enough shame?

Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! But they set him so high

That all the ships of the world could stare at him, passing by.

God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible fowls of the air,

But not the black heart of the lawyer who killed him, and hanged him there. 40

IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last good-bye;

They had fastened the door of his cell. "O mother!" I heard him cry.

I couldn't get back though I tried: he had something further to say,

And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me away.

X

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that was dead, 45

They seized me and shut me up: they fastened me down on my bed.

"Mother, O mother!"—he called in the dark to me, year after year—

They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that I couldn't but hear.

And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid and still

They let me abroad again—but the creatures had worked their will. 50

XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—

I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a theft?—

My baby, the bones that had sucked me, the bones that had laughed and had cried—

Theirs? O, no! they are mine—not theirs—they had moved in my side.

XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kissed 'em, I buried 'em all— 55

I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night, by the churchyard wall.

My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill sound:

But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

XIII

They would scratch him up: they would hang him again on the cursed tree.

Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know—let all that be, 60

And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good-will toward men—

"Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord" let me hear it again:

"Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering." Yes, O yes!

For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Saviour lives but to bless.

He 'll never put on the black cap except
for the worst of the worst, 65
And the first may be last—I have heard
it in church—and the last may be
first.

Suffering—O, long-suffering—yes, as the
Lord must know:

Year after year, in the mist and the wind
and the shower and the snow.

XIV

Heard, have you? What? they have told
you he never repented his sin.

How do they know it? are *they* his
mother? are *you* of his kin? 70

Heard! Have you ever heard, when the
storm on the downs began,

The wind that 'ill wail like a child and
the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

XV

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's
all very well.

But I go tonight to my boy, and I shall
not find him in hell.

For I cared so much for my boy that the
Lord has looked into my care; 75

And He means me, I'm sure, to be happy
with Willy, I know not where.

XVI

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul,
that is all your desire:

Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my
boy be gone to the fire?

I have been with God in the dark—go,
go, you may leave me alone:

You never have borne a child—you are
just as hard as a stone. 80

XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that
you mean to be kind;

But I cannot hear what you say for my
Willy's voice in the wind—

The snow and the sky so bright—he used
but to call in the dark:

And he calls to me now from the church
and not from the gibbet—For hark!

Nay—you can hear it yourself: it is com-
ing—shaking the walls— 85

Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good-
night. I am going. He calls.

"FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE"

(1880)

Row us out from Desenzano: to your Sir-
mione, row!—

So they rowed, and there we landed—"O
venusta Sirmio!"

There to me through all the groves of
olive in the summer glow,

There beneath the Roman ruin where the
purple flowers grow,

Came that "Ave atque Vale" of the Poet's
hopeless woe,— 5

Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hun-
dred years ago,—

"Frater Ave atque Vale"; as we wandered
to and fro,

Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the
Garda Lake below

Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-sil-
very Sirmio!

TO VIRGIL

(1882)

Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's
lofty temples robed in fire,

Ilion falling, Rome arising, wars, and filial
faith, and Dido's pyre;

Landscape-lover, lord of language more
than he that sang the "Works and
Days,"—

All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out
from many a golden phrase;

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and
herd; 5

All the charm of all the Muses often
flowering in a lonely word;

Poet of the happy Tityrus piping under-
neath his beechen bowers;

Poet of the poet-satyr whom the laughing
shepherd bound with flowers;

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying in the bliss-
ful years again to be,

Summers of the snakeless meadow, unlaborious earth and oarless sea; 10

Thou that seest Universal Nature moved
by Universal Mind;

Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of humankind;

Light among the vanished ages; star that
gildest yet this phantom shore;

Golden branch amid the shadows,—kings
and realms that pass to rise no more;

Now thy Forum roars no longer, fallen
every purple Cæsar's dome— 15

Though thine ocean-roll of rhythm sound
forever of Imperial Rome:

Now the Rome of slaves hath perished,
and the Rome of freemen holds her
place,

I, from out the Northern Island sundered
once from all the human race,

I salute thee, Mantovano, I that loved thee
since my day began,—

Wielder of the stateliest measure ever
moulded by the lips of man. 20

THE ANCIENT SAGE

(1885)

A thousand summers ere the time of
Christ,

From out his ancient city came a Seer;
Whom one that loved and honored him,

and yet

Was no disciple, richly garbed, but worn
From wasteful living, followed,—in his
hand 5

A scroll of verse; till that old man before
A cavern, whence an affluent fountain
poured

From darkness into daylight, turned and
spoke:—

This wealth of waters might but seem
to draw

From yon dark cave; but, son, the source
is higher, 10

Yon summit half-a-league in air—and
higher

The cloud that hides it—higher still the
heavens

Whereby the cloud was moulded, and
whereout

The cloud descended. Force is from the
heights.

I am wearied of our city, son, and go 15
To spend my one last year among the hills.

What hast thou there? Some death-song
for the Ghouls

To make their banquet relish? Let me
read.

"How far through all the bloom and brake
That nightingale is heard! 20

What power but the bird's could make
This music in the bird?

How summer-bright are yonder skies,
And earth as fair in hue!

And yet what sign of aught that lies 25
Behind the green and blue?

But man today is fancy's fool
As man hath ever been.

The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule
Were never heard or seen." 30

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless, and
wilt dive

Into the temple-cave of thine own self,
There, brooding by the central altar, thou

Mayst haply learn the Nameless hath a
voice,

By which thou wilt abide, if thou be
wise, 35

As if thou knewest, though thou canst not
know.

For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow
there,

But never yet hath dipt into the abysm:
 The abysm of all abysms, beneath, with-
 in 40
 The blue of sky and sea, the green of
 earth;
 And in the million-millionth of a grain
 Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,
 And ever vanishing, never vanishes, —
 To me, my son, more mystic than my-
 self, 45
 Or even than the Nameless is to me.

And when thou sendest thy free soul
 through heaven,
 Nor understandest bound nor boundless-
 ness,
 Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred
 names.
 And if the Nameless should withdraw
 from all 50
 Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world
 Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

"And since — from when this earth began —
 The Nameless never came
 Among us, never spake with man, 55
 And never named the Name!" —

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O
 my son,
 Nor canst thou prove the world thou mov-
 est in.
 Thou canst not prove that thou art body
 alone,
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit
 alone, 60
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art both
 in one.
 Thou canst not prove thou art immortal,
 — no,
 Nor yet that thou art mortal: nay, my
 son,
 Thou canst not prove that I, who speak
 with thee,
 Am not thyself in converse with thyself. 65
 For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
 Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be
 wise,
 Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,

And cling to Faith beyond the forms of
 Faith!
 She reels not in the storm of warring
 words, 70
 She brightens at the clash of "Yes" and
 "No";
 She sees the best that glimmers through
 the worst,
 She feels the sun is hid but for a night;
 She spies the summer through the winter
 bud,
 She tastes the fruit before the blossom
 falls, 75
 She hears the lark within the songless egg;
 She finds the fountain where they wailed
 "Mirage!"

"What Power? aught akin to Mind,
 The mind in me and you?
 Or power as of the Gods gone blind, 80
 Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my son,
 That none but gods could build this house
 of ours, —
 So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
 All work of man, yet, like all work of
 man, 85
 A beauty with defect — till That which
 knows,
 And is not known, but felt through what
 we feel
 Within ourselves is highest, shall descend
 On this half-deed, and shape it at the last
 According to the Highest in the High-
 est. 90

"What Power but the Years that make
 And break the vase of clay,
 And stir the sleeping earth, and wake
 The bloom that fades away?
 What rulers but the Days and Hours 95
 That cancel weal with woe,
 And wind the front of youth with flowers,
 And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing by,
 And seem to flicker past through sun and
 shade, — 100
 Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or
 Pain;

But with the Nameless is nor day nor hour;

Though we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought,

Break into "Thens" and "Whens" the Eternal Now,—

This double seeming of the single world!— 105

My words are like the babblings in a dream

Of nightmare, when the babblings break the dream;

But thou be wise in this dream-world of ours,

Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
But make the passing shadow serve thy will. 110

"The years that made the stripling wise
Undo their work again,
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
The last and least of men,—
Who clings to earth; and once would dare 115

Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
And now one breath of cooler air
Would loose him from his hold.
His winter chills him to the root,
He withers marrow and mind; 120
The kernel of the shrivelled fruit
Is jutting through the rind;

The tiger spasms tear his chest,
The palsy wags his head:
The wife, the sons, who love him best 125
Would fain that he were dead;
The griefs by which he once was wrung
Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow life

Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell? 130

"The shaft of scorn, that once had stung,
But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that swayed the past
Is feeble than his knees; 135
The passive sailor wrecks at last
In ever-silent seas;

The warrior hath forgot his arms,
The learned, all his lore;
The changing market frets or charms 140
The merchant's hope no more;

The prophet's beacon burned in vain,
And now is lost in cloud;
The plowman passes, bent with pain,
To mix with what he plowed; 145
The poet whom his age would quote
As heir of endless fame—
He knows not even the book he wrote,
Not even his own name:
For man has overlived his day, 150
And, darkening in the light,
Scarce feels the senses break away
To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird can fly.

"The years that, when my youth began, 155
Had set the lily and rose
By all my ways where'er they ran,
Have ended mortal foes:
My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust— 160
They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.
O rose-tree planted in my grief,
And growing, on her tomb,—
Her dust is greening in your leaf, 165
Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'
When all is dark as night." 170

My son, the world is dark with griefs and graves,—

So dark that men cry out against the heavens:

Who knows but that the darkness is in man?

The doors of Night may be the gates of Light;

For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and then 175

Suddenly healed, how wouldst thou glory in all

The splendors and the voices of the world!
And we,—the poor earth's dying race,
and yet

No phantoms,—watching from a phantom shore,

Await the last and largest sense to make 180

The phantom walls of this illusion fade,
And show us that the world is wholly fair.

"But vain the tears for darkened years
 As laughter over wine;
 And vain the laughter as the tears, 185
 O brother, mine or thine:
 For all that laugh, and all that weep,
 And all that breathe are one
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep
 That moves, and all is gone." 190

But that one ripple on the boundless deep
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and it-
 self

For ever changing form, but evermore
 One with the boundless motion of the
 deep.

"Yet wine and laughter, friends! and set 195
 The lamps alight, and call
 For golden music; and forget
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my
 son!

But earth's dark forehead flings athwart
 the heavens 200

Her shadow crowned with stars — and
 yonder, out

To northward, some that never set, but
 pass

From sight and night to lose themselves in
 day.

I hate the black negation of the bier,
 And wish the dead, — as happier than our-
 selves 205

And higher, having climbed one step be-
 yond

Our village miseries, — might be borne in
 white

To burial or to burning, hymned from
 hence

With songs in praise of death, and
 crowned with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of today, 210
 Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent Word
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of
 man.

"Though some have gleams, or so they say,
 Of more than mortal things." 215

Today? but what of yesterday? For oft
 On me, when boy, there came what then I
 called,

Who knew no books and no philosophies,
 In my boy-phrase, "The Passion of the
 Past."

The first gray streak of earliest summer-
 dawn, 220

The last long strife of waning crimson
 gloom, —

As if the late and early were but one, —

A height, a broken grange, a grove, a
 flower

Had murmurs, "Lost and gone, and lost
 and gone!"

A breath, a whisper, — some divine fare-
 well, — 225

Desolate sweetness — far and far away; —
 What had he loved, what had he lost, the
 boy?

I know not, and I speak of what has been.

And more, my son! For more than once
 when I

Sat all alone, revolving in myself 230

The word that is the symbol of myself, —

The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,

And past into the Nameless, as a cloud

Melts into heaven. I touched my limbs:
 the limbs

Were strange, not mine — and yet no
 shade of doubt, 235

But utter clearness; and through loss of
 self

The gain of such large life as, matched
 with ours,

Were sun to spark, — unshadowable in
 words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-
 world.

"And idle gleams will come and go, 240
 But still the clouds remain;"

The clouds themselves are children of the
 Sun.

"And Night and Shadow rule below,
 When only Day should reign."

And Day and Night are children of the
 Sun, 245
 And idle gleams to thee are light to me.
 Some say, the Light was father of the
 Night,
 And some, the Night was father of the
 Light:
 No night, no day! — I touch thy world
 again —
 No ill, no good! Such counter-terms, my
 son, 250
 Are border-races, holding each its own
 By endless war. But night enough is there
 In yon dark city. Get thee back; and
 since
 The key to that weird casket, which for
 thee
 But holds a skull, is neither thine nor
 mine, 255
 But in the hand of what is more than
 man, —
 Or in man's hand when man is more than
 man, —
 Let be thy wail, and help thy fellow-men,
 And make thy gold thy vassal, not thy
 king,
 And fling free alms into the beggar's
 bowl, 260
 And send the day into the darkened heart.
 Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,
 A dying echo from a falling wall.
 Nor care — for Hunger hath the evil
 eye —
 To vex the noon with fiery gems, or
 fold 265
 Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous
 looms;
 Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,
 Nor drown thyself with flies in honeyed
 wine.
 Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,
 And lose thy life by usage of thy sting; 270
 Nor harm an adder through the lust for
 harm,
 Nor make a snail's horn shrink for
 wantonness.
 And more: think well! Do-well will fol-
 low thought;
 And in the fatal sequence of this world

An evil thought may soil thy children's
 blood. 275
 But curb the beast would cast thee in the
 mire,
 And leave the hot swamp of voluptuous-
 ness, —
 A cloud between the Nameless and thy-
 self, —
 And lay thine uphill shoulder to the
 wheel,
 And climb the Mount of Blessing: whence,
 if thou 280
 Look higher, then, — perchance, — thou
 mayest — beyond
 A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
 And past the range of Night and Shadow
 — see
 The high-heaven dawn of more than
 mortal day
 Strike on the Mount of Vision!
 So, farewell. 285

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

(1889)

The Lord let the house of a brute to the
 soul of a man,
 And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"
 And the Lord — "Not yet: but make it as
 clean as you can,
 And then I will let you a better."

I

If my body come from brutes, my soul
 uncertain or a fable, 5
 Why not bask amid the senses while
 the sun of morning shines, —
 I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds,
 and in my stable,
 Youth and health, and birth and wealth,
 and choice of women and of wines?

II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old
 Age, save breaking my bones on the
 rack?
 Would I had passed in the morning that
 looks so bright from afar! 10

OLD AGE: Done for thee? starved the wild
 beast that was linked with thee
 eighty years back.
 Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven
 that hangs on a star!

I

If my body come from brutes, though
 somewhat finer than their own,
 I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall
 the royal voice be mute?
 No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag
 me from the throne, 15
 Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule
 thy province of the brute.

II

I have climbed to the snows of Age, and
 I gaze at a field in the Past,
 Where I sank with the body at times in
 the sloughs of a low desire;
 But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the
 Man is quiet at last
 As he stands on the heights of his life with
 a glimpse of a height that is
 higher. 20

FAR — FAR — AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

(1888)

What sight so lured him through the fields
 he knew
 As where earth's green stole into heaven's
 own hue,
 Far — far — away?

What sound was dearest in his native
 dells?
 The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
 Far — far — away?

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain
 or joy,
 Through those three words would haunt
 him when a boy:
 Far — far — away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? A
 breath 10
 From some fair dawn beyond the doors
 of death
 Far — far — away?

Far, far, how far? From o'er the gates of
 birth,
 The faint horizons, all the bounds of
 earth,
 Far — far — away? 15

What charm in words, a charm no words
 could give?
 O dying words, can Music make you live
 Far — far — away?

THE THROSTLE

(1889)

"Summer is coming, summer is coming.
 I know it, I know it, I know it.
 Light again, leaf again, life again, love
 again!"
 Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue. 5
 Last year you sang it as gladly.
 "New, new, new, new!" Is it then so
 new
 That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young
 again" —
 Never a prophet so crazy! 10
 And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend:
 See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy
 year!"
 O warble unchidden, unbidden!
 Summer is coming, is coming, my dear, 15
 And all the winters are hidden.

THE OAK

(1889)

Live thy Life,
 Young and old,
 Like yon oak:
 Bright in spring,
 Living gold; 5

Summer-rich
 Then; and then
 Autumn-changed,
 Soberer-hued
 Gold again. 10
 All his leaves
 Fallen at length,
 Look, he stands,
 Trunk and bough,
 Naked strength. 15

THE MAKING OF MAN

(1892)

Where is one that, born of woman, altogether can escape
 From the lower world within him, —
 moods of tiger, or of ape?

Man as yet is being made; and ere the
 crowning Age of ages,
 Shall not æon after æon pass and touch
 him into shape?

All about him shadow still; but, while the
 races flower and fade, 5
 Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly
 gaining on the shade,

Till the peoples all are one, and all their
 voices blend in choric
 Hallelujah to the Maker: "It is finished.
 Man is made."

DOUBT AND PRAYER

(1892)

Though Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy
 rod,
 Rail at "Blind Fate" with many a vain
 "Alas!"
 From sin through sorrow unto Thee we
 pass
 By that same path our true forefathers
 trod;
 And let not Reason fail me, nor the sod 5
 Draw from my death Thy living flower
 and grass,
 Before I learn that Love which is, and
 was,

My Father, and my Brother, and my God!
 Steel me with patience! soften me with
 grief!

Let blow the trumpet strongly while I
 pray, 10
 Till this embattled wall of unbelief, —
 My prison, not my fortress, — fall away!
 Then, if Thou wilt, let my day be brief,
 So Thou wilt strike Thy glory through
 the day.

CROSSING THE BAR

(1889)

Sunset and evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the bar,
 When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as, moving, seems asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam, — 6
 When that which drew from out the
 boundless deep
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark! 10
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time
 and Place

The flood may bear me far, — 14
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crossed the bar.

ROBERT BROWNING

(1812-1889)

From PARACELSUS, PART FIFTH

(1835)

The Development of Man

I knew, I felt (perception unexpressed,
 Uncomprehended by our narrow thought,
 But somehow felt and known in every
 shift
 And change in the spirit, — nay, in every
 pore 640

Of the body, even) what God is, what we
are,
What life is — how God tastes an infinite
joy

In infinite ways, one everlasting bliss;
From whom all being emanates, all power
Proceeds; in whom is life forevermore, 645
Yet whom existence in its lowest form
Includes: where dwells enjoyment there is
he, —

With still a flying point of bliss remote,
A happiness in store afar, a sphere
Of distant glory in full view; thus
climbs 650
Pleasure its heights forever and forever.

The centre-fire heaves underneath the
earth,
And the earth changes like a human face;
The molten ore bursts up among the rocks,
Winds into the stone's heart, outbranches
bright 655

In hidden mines, spots barren river-beds,
Crumbles into fine sand where sunbeams
bask —

God joys therein. The wroth sea's waves
are edged

With foam, white as the bitten lip of hate,
When, in the solitary waste, strange
groups 660

Of young volcanos come up, cyclops-like,
Staring together with their eyes on
flame —

God tastes a pleasure in their uncouth
pride.

Then all is still; earth is a wintry clod.
But spring-wind, like a dancing psaltress,
passes 665

Over its breast to waken it: rare verdure
Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between
The withered tree-roots and the cracks of
frost,

Like a smile striving with a wrinkled face;
The grass grows bright, the boughs are
swoln with blooms 670

Like chrysalids impatient for the air;
The shining dorrs are busy, beetles run
Along the furrows, ants make their ado;
Above, birds fly in merry flocks, the lark

Soars up and up, shivering for very joy; 675
Afar the ocean sleeps; white fishing-gulls
Flit where the strand is purple with its
tribe

Of nested limpets; savage creatures seek
Their loves in wood and plain — and God
renews

His ancient rapture. Thus he dwells in
all, 680

From life's minute beginnings, up at last
To man, — the consummation of this
scheme

Of being, the completion of this sphere
Of life: whose attributes had here and
there

Been scattered o'er the visible world be-
fore, 685

Asking to be combined, — dim fragments
meant

To be united in some wondrous whole,
Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
Suggesting some one creature yet to make,
Some point where all those scattered rays
should meet 690

Convergent in the faculties of man.

Power — neither put forth blindly, nor
controlled

Calmly by perfect knowledge; to be used
At risk, inspired or checked by hope and
fear:

Knowledge — not intuition, but the
slow 695

Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil,
Strengthened by love: love — not serenely
pure,

But strong from weakness, like a chance-
sown plant

Which, cast on stubborn soil, puts forth
changed buds

And softer stains, unknown in happier
climes; 700

Love which endures and doubts and is
oppressed

And cherished, suffering much and much
sustained,

And blind, oft-failing, yet believing love,
A half-enlightened, often-checkered trust: —
Hints and previsions of which faculties 705
Are strewn confusedly everywhere about

The inferior natures; and all lead up
higher,
All shape out dimly the superior race,
The heir of hopes too fair to turn out
false, —
And man appears at last. 710

So far the seal
Is put on life; one stage of being complete,
One scheme wound up. And from the
grand result

A supplementary reflux of light
Illustrates all the inferior grades, explains
Each back step in the circle. Not alone 715
For their possessor dawn those qualities,
But the new glory mixes with the heaven
And earth: man, once descried, imprints
forever

His presence on all lifeless things. The
winds

Are henceforth voices, wailing or a
shout, 720

A querulous mutter or a quick gay
laugh, —

Never a senseless gust now man is born.
The herded pines commune and have deep
thoughts, —

A secret they assemble to discuss
When the sun drops behind their trunks,
which glare 725

Like grates of hell. The peerless cup
afloat

Of the lake-lily is an urn, some nymph
Swims bearing high above her head. No
bird

Whistles unseen but through the gaps
above

That let light in upon the gloomy
woods, 730

A shape peeps from the breezy forest-top,
Arch with small puckered mouth and
mocking eye.

The morn has enterprise; deep quiet
droops

With evening; triumph takes the sunset
hour;

Voluptuous transport ripens with the
corn 735

Beneath a warm moon like a happy face.

And this to fill us with regard for man,
With apprehension of his passing worth,
Desire to work his proper nature out,
And ascertain his rank and final place: 740
For these things tend still upward, progress is

The law of life, man is not Man as yet.
Nor shall I deem his object served, his
end

Attained, his genuine strength put fairly
forth,

While only here and there a star dis-
pels 745

The darkness, here and there a towering
mind

O'erlooks its prostrate fellows: when the
host

Is out at once to the despair of night,
When all mankind alike is perfected,
Equal in full-blown powers — then, not
till then, 750

I say, begins man's general infancy.
For wherefore make account of feverish
starts

Of restless members of a dormant whole,
Impatient nerves which quiver while the
body

Slumbers as in a grave? Oh, long ago 755

The brow was twitched, the tremulous lids
astir,

The peaceful mouth disturbed; half-ut-
tered speech

Ruffled the lip, and then the teeth were
set,

The breath drawn sharp, the strong right-
hand clenched stronger,

As it would pluck a lion by the jaw; 760
The glorious creature laughed out even in
sleep!

But when, full roused, each giant-limb
awake,

Each sinew strung, the great heart pulsing
fast,

He shall start up and stand on his own
earth, —

Then shall his long triumphant march
begin, 765

Thence shall his being date: thus wholly
roused,

What he achieves shall be set down to him—

When all the race is perfected alike
As man, that is: all tended to mankind,
And, man produced, all has its end thus far. 770

But in completed man begins anew
A tendency to God. Prognostics told
Man's near approach: so in man's self arise

August anticipations, symbols, types
Of a dim splendor ever on before 775
In that eternal circle life pursues.

For men begin to pass their nature's bound,

And find new hopes and cares which fast supplant

Their proper joys and griefs: they grow too great

For narrow creeds of right and wrong, which fade 780

Before the unmeasured thirst for good; while peace

Rises within them ever more and more.

Such men are even now upon the earth,
Serene amid the half-formed creatures round,

Who should be saved by them and joined with them. 785

In my own heart love had not been made wise

To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,

To know even hate is but a mask of love's,

To see a good in evil, and a hope

In ill-success; to sympathize, be proud 875

Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;

All with a touch of nobleness, despite
Their error, upward tending all though weak, 880

Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,

But dream of him, and guess where he may be,

And do their best to climb and get to him.

All this I knew not, and I failed. . . .

Songs from PIPPA PASSES

(1841)

(*From Part First*)

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven:
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing; 225
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

(*From Part Second*)

Give her but a least excuse to love me!

When—where—

How—can this arm establish her above me, 255

If fortune fixed her as my lady there,—

There already, to eternally reprove me?

("Hist!" said Kate the Queen;

But "Oh!" cried the maiden, binding her tresses,

"'Tis only a page that carols unseen, 260
Crumbling your hounds their messes!")

Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honor,

My heart!

Is she poor?—What costs it to be styled a donor?

Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part. 265

But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!

("Nay, list!" bade Kate the Queen;

And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,

"'Tis only a page that carols unseen, 270
Fitting your hawks their jesses!")

(From Part Third)

You'll love me yet! — and I can tarry
 Your love's protracted growing: 305
 June reared that bunch of flowers you
 carry,
 From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now: some seed
 At least is sure to strike,
 And yield — what you'll not pluck in-
 deed, 310
 Not love, but, may be, like.

You'll look at least on love's remains,
 A grave's one violet:
 Your look? — that pays a thousand pains.
 What's death? You'll love me yet! 315

CAVALIER TUNES

(1842)

I. MARCHING ALONG

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
 Bidding the crop-headed Parliament
 swing;
 And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
 And see the rogues flourish and honest
 folk droop,
 Marched them along, fifty-score strong, 5
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this
 song: —

God for King Charles! Pym and such
 carles
 To the Devil that prompts 'em their
 treasonous parles!
 Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
 Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor
 sup 10
 Till you're —

CHORUS: Marching along, fifty-score
 strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen,
 singing this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell
 Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry
 as well! 15

England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here
 CHORUS: Marching along, fifty-score
 strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen,
 singing this song?

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and
 his snarls 20
 To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent
 carles!
 Hold by the right, you double your might;
 So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the
 fight,

CHORUS: March we along, fifty-score
 strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen,
 singing this song! 25

II. GIVE A ROUSE

King Charles, and who'll do him right
 now?
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight
 now?
 Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
 King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since? 5
 Who raised me the house that sank once?
 Who helped me to gold I spent since?
 Who found me in wine you drank once?

CHORUS: King Charles, and who'll do
 him right now?

King Charles, and who's ripe
 for fight now? 10

Give a rouse: here's, in hell's
 despite now,

King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
 By the old fool's side that begot him?
 For whom did he cheer and laugh else, 15
 While Noll's damned troopers shot him?

CHORUS: King Charles, and who'll do
 him right now?

King Charles, and who's ripe
 for fight now?

Give a rouse: here's, in hell's
 despite now,

King Charles! 20

III. BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Rescue my castle before the hot day

Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,

CHORUS: Boot, saddle, to horse, and
away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd
say; 5

Many's the friend there, will listen and
pray

"God's luck to gallants that strike up the
lay —

CHORUS: Boot, saddle, to horse, and
away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads'
array. 10

Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by
my fay,

CHORUS: Boot, saddle, to horse, and
away?"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest
and gay,

Laughs when you talk of surrendering:
"Nay!

I've better counsellors; what counsel
they? 15

CHORUS: Boot, saddle, to horse, and
away!"

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH
CAMP

(1842)

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:

A mile or so away,

On a little mound, Napoleon

Stood on our storming-day;

With neck out-thrust, you fancy how, — 5
Legs wide, — arms locked behind,

As if to balance the prone brow

Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans

That soar, to earth may fall, 10

Let once my army-leader, Lannes,

Waver at yonder wall," —

Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew

A rider, bound on bound

Full-galloping; nor bridle drew 15

Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung, in smiling joy,

And held himself erect

By just his horse's mane, a boy:

You hardly could suspect — 20

So tight he kept his lips compressed,

Scarce any blood came through —

You looked twice ere you saw his breast

Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's
grace 25

We've got you Ratisbon!

The marshal's in the market-place;

And you'll be there anon

To see your flag-bird flap his vans

Where I, to heart's desire, 30

Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed:
his plans

Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently

Softened itself, — as sheathes

A film the mother-eagle's eye 35

When her bruised eaglet breathes:

"You're wounded!" — "Nay," the soldier's
pride

Touched to the quick, he said —

"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,

Smiling, the boy fell dead. 40

THE LOST LEADER

(1845)

Just for a handful of silver he left us,

Just for a riband to stick in his coat —

Found the one gift of which fortune bereft
us,

Lost all the others she lets us devote.

They, with the gold to give, doled him out
silver, — 5

So much was theirs who so little al-
lowed!

How all our copper had gone for his serv-
ice!

Rags — were they purple, his heart had
been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him,
honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, 10
Learned his great language, caught his
clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for
us, —
Burns, Shelley, were with us: they
watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the
freemen, — 15
He alone sinks to the rear and the
slaves!
We shall march prospering, — not through
his presence;
Songs may inspirit us, — not from his
lyre;
Deeds will be done, — while he boasts his
quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade
aspire. 20
Blot out his name, then: record one lost
soul more,
One task more declined, one more foot-
path untrod,
One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for
angels,
One wrong more to man, one more in-
sult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come
back to us! 25
There would be doubt, hesitation, and
pain,
Forced praise on our part, — the glimmer
of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him —
strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his
own: 30
Then let him receive the new knowledge
and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the
throne!

SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH
CLOISTER

(1842)

Gr-r-r — there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!
What? your myrtle-bush wants trim-
ming? 5
Oh, that rose has prior claims —
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!
At the meal we sit together:
Salve tibi! I must hear 10
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt —
What's the Latin name for "parsley"? 15
What's the Greek name for Swine's
Snout?
Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself, 20
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps —
Marked with L for our initial!
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)
Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores 25
Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,
— Can't I see his dead eye glow, 30
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
(That is, if he'd let it show!)
When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection, 35
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp —
In three sips the Arian frustrate:
While he drains his at one gulp. 40

Oh, those melons! If he's able
 We're to have a feast! so nice!
 One goes to the Abbot's table,
 All of us get each a slice.
 How go on your flowers? None
 double? 45

Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
 Strange! — and I, too, at such trouble
 Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,
 Once you trip on it, entails 50
 Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
 One sure, if another fails:
 If I trip him just a-dying,
 Sure of heaven as sure can be,
 Spin him round and send him flying 55
 Off to hell, a Manichee?

Or, my scrofulous French novel
 On gray paper with blunt type!
 Simply glance at it, you grovel.
 Hand and foot in Belial's gripe: 60
 If I double down its pages
 At the woeful sixteenth print, —
 When he gathers his greengages,
 Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

Or, there's Satan! — one might venture 65
 Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
 Such a flaw in the indenture
 As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
 Blasted lay that rose-acacia
 We're so proud of! Hy, Zy,
Hine . . . 70
 'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ,*
Ave, Virgo! Gr-r-r — you swine!

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA
 (1842)

That's my last Duchess painted on the
 wall,
 Looking as if she were alive. I call
 That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's
 hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she
 stands.

Will't please you sit and look at her?
 — I said 5
 "Frà Pandolf" by design: for never
 read
 Strangers like you that pictured coun-
 tenance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest
 glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none
 puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but
 I) 10
 And seemed as they would ask me, if
 they durst,
 How such a glance came there; so, not
 the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas
 not
 Her husband's presence only, called that
 spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: per-
 haps 15
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle
 laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much"; or
 "Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat;"
 such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause
 enough 20
 For calling up that spot of joy. She
 had
 A heart — how shall I say? — too soon
 made glad,
 Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went every-
 where.
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her
 breast, 25
 The dropping of the daylight in the
 West,
 The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white
 mule
 She rode with round the terrace — all and
 each
 Would draw from her alike the approving
 speech, — 30

Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—
 good! but thanked
 Somehow—I know not how—as if she
 ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old
 name
 With anybody's gift.—Who'd stoop to
 blame
 This sort of trifling? Even had you
 skill 35
 In speech (which I have not) to make
 your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just
 this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you
 miss,
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if she
 let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made
 excuse—
 E'en then would be some stooping; and
 I choose
 Never to stoop.—Oh sir, she smiled, no
 doubt,
 Whenever I passed her; but who passed
 without
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave
 commands; 45
 Then all smiles stopped together.

There she stands
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll
 meet
 The company below, then.—I repeat,
 The Count your master's known munifi-
 cence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence 50
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I
 avowed
 At starting, is my object.—Nay, we'll
 go
 Together down, sir.—Notice Neptune,
 though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze
 for me!

CRISTINA

(1842)

She should never have looked at me
 If she meant I should not love her!
 There are plenty—men you call such,
 I suppose—she may discover
 All her soul to, if she pleases, 5
 And yet leave much as she found them:
 But I'm not so, and she knew it
When she fixed me, glancing round
them.

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
 But I can't tell (there's my weakness) 10
What her look said!—no vile cant, sure,
 About "need to strew the bleakness
 Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed,
 That the sea feels"—no "strange
 yearning
 That such souls have, most to lavish 15
 Where there's chance of least return-
 ing."

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
 But not quite so sunk that moments,
 Sure though seldom, are denied us,
 When the spirit's true endowments 20
 Stand out plainly from its false ones,
 And apprise it if pursuing
 Or the right way or the wrong way,
 To its triumph or undoing.

There are flashes struck from midnights, 25
 There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
 Whereby piled-up honors perish,
 Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,—
 While just this or that poor impulse,
 Which for once had play unstified, 30
 Seems the sole work of a lifetime
 That away the rest have trifled.

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
As she fixed me, she felt clearly:
 Ages past the soul existed, 35
 Here an age 'tis resting merely,
 And hence fleets again for ages;
 While the true end, sole and single,
 It stops here for is,—this love-way,—
 With some other soul to mingle? 40

Else it loses what it lived for,
 And eternally must lose it;
 Better ends may be in prospect,
 Deeper blisses, (if you choose it);
 But this life's end and this love-bliss 45
 Have been lost here. — Doubt you
 whether
 This she felt as, looking at me,
Mine and her souls rushed together?

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment,
 The world's honors, in derision, 50
 Trampled out the light forever:
 Never fear but there's provision
 Of the devil's to quench knowledge
 Lest we walk the earth in rapture!
 — Making those who catch God's secret 55
 Just so much more prize their capture!

Such am I: the secret's mine now!
 She has lost me, I have gained her;
 Her soul's mine: and thus, grown perfect,
 I shall pass my life's remainder. 60
 Life will just hold out the proving
 Both our powers, alone and blended:
 And then, come the next life quickly!
 This world's use will have been ended.

IN A GONDOLA

(1842)

He sings:

I send my heart up to thee, — all my heart
 In this my singing.
 For the stars help me, and the sea bears
 part;
 The very night is clinging
 Closer to Venice' streets to leave one
 space 5
 Above me, whence thy face
May light my joyous heart to thee its
dwelling place.

She speaks:

Say after me, and try to say
 My very words, as if each word
 Came from you of your own accord, 10
 In your own voice, in your own way:

"This woman's heart and soul and brain
 Are mine as much as this gold chain
 She bids me wear; which" (say again)
 "I choose to make, by cherishing, 15
 A precious thing, or choose to fling
 Over the boat-side, ring by ring."
 And yet once more say . . . no word
 more,
 Since words are only words! Give o'er!

Unless you call me, all the same, 20
 Familiarly by my pet name, —
 Which if the Three should hear you call,
 And me reply to, would proclaim
 At once our secret to them all.
 Ask of me, too, command me, blame — 25
 Do: break down the partition-wall
 'Twixt us, the daylight world beholds
 Curtained in dusk and splendid folds!
 What's left but — all of me to take?
 I am the Three's: prevent them, slake 30
 Your thirst! 'Tis said, the Arab sage,
 In practising with gems, can loose
 Their subtle spirit in his cruce
 And leave but ashes: so, sweet mage,
 Leave them my ashes when thy use 35
 Sucks out my soul, thy heritage!

He sings:

Past we glide, and past, and past!
 What's that poor Agnese doing
 Where they make the shutters fast?
 Gray Zanobi's just a-wooing 40
 To his couch the purchased bride:
 Past we glide!

Past we glide, and past, and past!
 Why's the Pucci Palace flaring
 Like a beacon to the blast? 45
 Guests by hundreds, — not one caring
 If the dear host's neck were wried:
 Past we glide!

She sings:

The moth's kiss, first!
 Kiss me as if you made believe 50
 You were not sure, this eve,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up: so, here and there

You brush it, till I grow aware
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst. 55

The bee's kiss, now!
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday, —
A bud that dares not disallow
The claim: so all is rendered up; 60
And passively its shattered cup,
Over your head, to sleep I bow.

He sings:

What are we two?
I am a Jew,
And carry thee, farther than friends can
pursue, 65
To a feast of our tribe:
Where they need thee to bribe
The devil that blasts them unless he
imbibe
Thy . . . Scatter the vision forever! And
now,
As of old, I am I, thou art thou! 70

Say again, what we are?
The sprite of a star,
I lure thee above where the destinies bar
My plumes their full play 75
Till a ruddier ray
Than my pale one announce there is with-
ering away
Some . . . Scatter the vision forever! And
now,
As of old, I am I, thou art thou!

He muses:

Oh, which were best, to roam or rest?
The land's lap, or the water's breast? 80
To sleep on yellow millet-sheaves;
Or swim in lucid shallows just
Eluding water-lily leaves, —
An inch from Death's black fingers, thrust
To lock you, whom release he must: 85
Which life were best on Summer eves?

He speaks, musing:

Lie back: could thought of mine improve
you?
From this shoulder let there spring
A wing; from this, another wing:

Wings, not legs and feet, shall move
you! 90

Snow-white must they spring, to blend
With your flesh; but I intend
They shall deepen to the end,
Broader, into burning gold,
Till both wings crescent-wise enfold 95
Your perfect self, from 'neath your feet
To o'er your head, — where, lo, they meet
As if a million sword-blades hurled
Defiance from you to the world!

Rescue me thou, the only real! 100
And scare away this mad ideal
That came, nor motions to depart!
Thanks! Now, stay ever as thou art:

Still he muses:

What if the Three should catch at last
Thy serenader? While there's cast 105
Paul's cloak about my head, and fast
Gian pinions me, Himself has past
His stylet through my back: I reel;
And . . . is it thou I feel?

They trail me, these three godless
knaves, 110
Past every church that saints and saves;
Nor stop till, where the cold sea raves
By Lido's wet accursed graves,
They scoop mine, roll me to its brink,
And . . . on thy breast I sink! 115

She replies, musing:

Dip your arm o'er the boat-side, elbow-
deep,
As I do, — thus: were death so unlike
sleep,
Caught this way? Death's to fear from
flame or steel,
Or poison, doubtless; but from water —
feel! —
Go find the bottom! — Would you stay
me? — There! — 120
Now pluck a great blade of that ribbon-
grass
To plait in where the foolish jewel was
I flung away: since you have praised my
hair,
'Tis proper to be choice in what I wear.

He speaks:

Row home? must we row home? Too
 surely 125
 Know I where its front's demurely
 Over the Giudecca piled:
 Window just with window mating,
 Door on door exactly waiting, —
All's the set face of a child. 130
But behind it, where's a trace
Of the staidness and reserve,
And formal lines without a curve,
In the same child's playing-face?
 No two windows look one way 135
 O'er the small sea-water thread
 Below them.

Ah, the autumn day

I, passing, saw you overhead!
 First, out a cloud of curtain blew,
 Then a sweet cry, and last came you — 140
 To catch your lory that must needs
 Escape just then, of all times then,
 To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds,
 And make me happiest of men.
 I scarce could breathe to see you reach 145
 So far back o'er the balcony
 To catch him ere he climbed too high
 Above you in the Smyrna peach —
 That quick the round smooth cord of gold,
 This coiled hair on your head, unrolled, 150
 Fell down you like a gorgeous snake
 The Roman girls were wont, of old,
 When Rome there was, for coolness' sake
 To let lie curling o'er their bosoms.
 Dear lory, may his beak retain 155
 Ever its delicate rose stain
 As if the wounded lotos-blossoms
 Had marked their thief to know again!

Stay longer yet, for others' sake
 Than mine! What should your chamber
 do? 160
 — With all its rarities that ache
 In silence while day lasts, but wake
 At night-time, and their life renew, —
 Suspended just to pleasure you
 Who brought against their will together 165
 These objects, and, while day lasts, weave
 Around them such a magic tether

That dumb they look. Your harp, be-
 lieve, —

With all the sensitive tight strings,
 Which dare not speak, — now to itself 170
 Breathes slumberously, as if some elf
 Went in and out the chords his wings
 Make murmur, wheresoe'er they graze;
 As an angel may, between the maze
 Of midnight palace-pillars, on 175
 And on, to sow God's plagues, have gone
 Through guilty glorious Babylon. —
 And while such murmurs flow, the nymph
 Bends o'er the harp-top from her shell;
 As the dry limpet for the lymph 180
 Come with a tune he knows so well.
 And how your statues' hearts must swell!
 And how your pictures must descend
 To see each other, friend with friend!
 Oh, could you take them by surprise, 185
 You'd find Schidone's eager Duke
 Doing the quaintest courtesies
 To that prim saint by Haste-thee-Luke!
 And, deeper into her rock den,
 Bold Castelfranco's Magdalen 190
 You'd find retreated from the ken
 Of that robed counsel-keeping Ser—
 As if the Tizian thinks of her,
 And is not, rather, gravely bent
 On seeing for himself what toys 195
 Are these, his progeny invent;
 What litter now the board employs
 Whereon he signed a document
 That got him murdered! Each enjoys
 Its night so well, you cannot break 200
 The sport up, — so, indeed, must make
 More stay with me, for others' sake.

She speaks:

Tomorrow, if a harp-string, say,
 Is used to tie the jasmine back
 That overfloods my room with sweets, 205
 Contrive your Zorzi somehow meets
 My Zanze! If the ribbon's black,
 The Three are watching: keep away!

Your gondola—let Zorzi wreathe
 A mesh of water-weeds about 210
 Its prow, as if he unaware

Had struck some quay or bridge-foot
stair!

That I may throw a paper out
As you and he go underneath.

There's Zanze's vigilant taper: safe are
we. 215

Only one minute more tonight with me?

Resume your past self of a month ago!

Be you the bashful gallant, I will be

The lady with the colder breast than snow.

Now bow you, as becomes, nor touch my
hand 220

More than I touch yours, when I step to
land,

And say, "All thanks, Siora!" —

Heart to heart

And lips to lips! Yet once more, ere we
part,

Clasp me and make me thine, as mine thou
art!

He is surprised, and stabbed:

It was ordained to be so, sweet! — and
best 225

Comes now, beneath thine eyes, upon thy
breast.

Still kiss me! Care not for the cowards!
Care

Only to put aside thy beauteous hair

My blood will hurt! The Three, I do not
scorn

To death, because they never lived: but I 230

Have lived indeed, and so — (yet one more
kiss) — can die!

THE FLOWER'S NAME

(1844)

Here's the garden she walked across,

Arm in my arm, such a short while
since;

Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss

Hinders the hinges and makes them
wince!

She must have reached this shrub ere she
turned, 5

As back with that murmur the wicket
swung;

For she laid the poor snail my chance foot
spurned,

To feed and forget it the leaves among.

Down this side of the gravel-walk

She went while her robe's edge brushed
the box; 10

And here she paused in her gracious talk

To point me a moth on the milk-white
phlox.

Roses, ranged in valiant row,

I will never think that she passed you
by!

She loves you, noble roses, I know; 15

But yonder, see, where the rock-plants
lie!

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip, —
Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its
claim;

Till she gave me, with pride to make no
slip,

Its soft meandering Spanish name: 20

What a name! Was it love or praise?

Speech half-asleep or song half-awake?

I must learn Spanish, one of these days,

Only for that slow sweet name's sake.

Roses, if I live and do well, 25

I may bring her, one of these days,

To fix you fast with as fine a spell,

Fit you each with his Spanish phrase.

But do not detain me now; for she lingers

There, like sunshine over the ground, 30

And ever I see her soft white fingers

Searching after the bud she found.

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow
not,

Stay as you are and be loved forever!

Bud, if I kiss you 'tis that you blow not: 35

Mind, the shut pink mouth opens never!

For while it pouts, her fingers wrestle,

Twinkling the audacious leaves between,

Till round they turn and down they
nestle —

Is not the dear mark still to be seen? 40

Where I find her not, beauties vanish;
 Whither I follow her, beauties flee:
 Is there no method to tell her in Spanish
 June's twice June since she breathed it
 with me?
 Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,
 Treasure my lady's lightest footfall! 46
 — Ah, you may flout and turn up your
 faces,
 Roses, — you are not so fair after all!

SONG

(1845)

Nay but you, who do not love her,
 Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
 Holds earth aught — speak truth — above
 her?
 Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,
 And this last fairest tress of all, 5
 So fair, see, ere I let it fall?

Because, you spend your lives in praising;
 To praise, you search the wide world
 over:

Then why not witness, calmly gazing,
 If earth holds aught — speak truth —
 above her?

Above this tress, and this, I touch
 But cannot praise, I love so much!

MEETING AT NIGHT

(1845)

The gray sea and the long black land;
 And the yellow half-moon large and low;
 And the startled little waves that leap
 In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
 As I gain the cove with pushing prow, 5
 And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
 Three fields to cross, till a farm appears;
 A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
 And blue spurt of a lighted match, — 10
 And a voice less loud, through its joys and
 fears,
 Than the two hearts beating each to each!

PARTING AT MORNING

(1845)

Round the cape of a sudden came the
 sea,
 And the sun looked over the mountain's
 rim:
 And straight was a path of gold for him,
 And the need of a world of men for me.

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM
ABROAD

(1845)

Oh, to be in England
 Now that April's there,
 And whoever wakes in England
 Sees, some morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs and the brush-
 wood sheaf 5
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard
 bough
 In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the
 swallows! 10
 Hark, — where my blossomed pear-tree in
 the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the
 clover
 Blossoms and dewdrops, — at the bent
 spray's edge,
 That's the wise thrush: he sings each song
 twice over,
 Lest you should think he never could re-
 capture 15
 The first fine careless rapture!
 And though the fields look rough with
 hoary dew,
 All will be gay when noontide wakes
 anew
 The buttercups, the little children's
 dower —
 Far brighter than this gaudy melon-
 flower! 20

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB
AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH

ROME, 15—

(1845)

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping
back?

Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I
know not! Well,—

She, men would have to be your mother
once,

Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was! 5
What's done is done, and she is dead
beside,

Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a
dream.

Life,—how and what is it? As here I
lie 10

In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I
ask

"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace
seems all.

Saint Praxed's ever was the church for
peace:

And so, about this tomb of mine. I
fought 15

With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye
know:

Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd that snatch from out the
corner South

He graced his carrion with, God curse the
same!

Yet still my niche is not so cramped but
thence 20

One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir,—those silent
seats,—

And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk.
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there, 25
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,

With those nine columns round me, two
and two,

The odd one at my feet where Anselm
stands:

Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the
ripe

As fresh poured red wine of a mighty
pulse— 30

Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True
peach,

Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my
church—

What then? So much was saved if aught
were missed! 35

My sons, ye would not be my death? Go
dig

The white-grape vineyard where the oil-
press stood,

Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not,
I! . . .

Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft, 40
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,

Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,—
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's
breast . . .

Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas,
all,— 45

That brave Frascati villa with its bath,—
So, let the blue lump poise between my
knees,

Like God the Father's globe on both his
hands

Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay:
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and
burst! 50

Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our
years:

Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons?
Black—

'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How
else

Shall ye contrast my frieze to come be-
neath? 55

The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and
perchance

Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan 60
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment
off,

And Moses with the tables . . . but I
know

Ye mark me not! What do they whisper
thee,

Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp 65
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy traver-
tine

Which Gandolf from his tomb-top
chuckles at!

Nay, boys, ye love me — all of jasper,
then!

'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, — lest I
grieve

My bath must needs be left behind,
alas! 70

One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut:
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the
world —

And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manu-
scripts,

And mistresses with great smooth marbly
limbs? — 75

That's if ye carve my epitaph aright:

Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every
word,

No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second
line —

Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his
need!

And then how I shall lie through cen-
turies, 80

And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-
smoke!

For as I lie here, hours of the dead night, 85
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,

I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone
can point,

And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth,
drop

Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-
work: 90

And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange
thoughts

Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,

And this life too, — popes, cardinals, and
priests,

Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount, 95
Your tall pale mother with her talking
eyes,

And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, dis-
creet —

Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?

No Tully, said I: Ulpian at the best! — 100
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage! —

All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?

Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my
soul: 105

Or ye would heighten my impoverished
frieze,

Piece out its starved design, and fill my
vase

With grapes, and add a visor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx

That in his struggle throws the thyrsus
down, — 110

To comfort me on my entablature,
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask

"Do I live, am I dead?"

There, leave me, there!

For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death — ye wish it — God, ye wish it!

Stone — 115

Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares
which sweat

As if the corpse they keep were oozing
through —

And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,

But in a row: and, going, turn your
backs — 120

Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for
peace,

That I may watch at leisure if he leers, —
Old Gandolf, — at me, from his onion-
stone,

As still he envied me, so fair she was! 125

SAUL

(1845, 1855)

I

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere
I tell, ere thou speak,

Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I
wished it, and did kiss his cheek.

And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for
thy countenance sent,

Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor
until from his tent

Thou return with the joyful assurance the
King liveth yet, 5

Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with
the water be wet.

For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a
space of three days,

Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants,
of prayer nor of praise,

To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have
ended their strife,

And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch
sinks back upon life. 10

II

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved!
God's child with his dew

On thy gracious gold hair; and those lilies
still living and blue

Just broken to twine round thy harp-
strings, as if no wild heat

Were now raging to torture the desert!"

III

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers; and
rose on my feet, 15

And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder.
The tent was unlooped;

I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and
under I stooped.

Hands and knees on the 'slippery grass-
patch, all withered and gone,

That extends to the second enclosure, I
groped my way on

Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open.
Then once more I prayed, 20

And opened the foldskirts and entered, and
was not afraid

But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!"
And no voice replied.

At the first I saw naught but the black-
ness; but soon I descried

A something more black than the blackness,
— the vast, the upright

Main prop which sustains the pavilion;
and slow into sight 25

Grew a figure against it, gigantic and
blackest of all:

Then a sunbeam, that burst through the
tent-roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, —
both arms stretched out wide

On the great cross-support in the centre,
that goes to each side:

He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there,
as, caught in his pangs 30

And waiting his change, the king-serpent
all heavily hangs,

Far away from his kind, in the pine, till
deliverance come

With the spring-time, — so agonized Saul,
drear and stark, blind and dumb.

V

Then I tuned my harp, — took off the lilies
we twine round its chords

Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noon-
tide — those sunbeams like swords! 35

And I first played the tune all our sheep
know, as, one after one,

So docile they come to the pen-door till
folding be done.

They are white and untorn by the bushes;
for lo, they have fed

Where the long grasses stifle the water
 within the stream's bed;
 And now one after one seeks its lodging, as
 star follows star 40
 Into eve and the blue far above us, — so
 blue and so far!

VI

— Then the tune for which quails on the
 cornland will each leave his mate
 To fly after the player; then, what makes
 the crickets elate
 Till for boldness they fight one another;
 and then, what has weight
 To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside
 his sand-house — 45
 There are none such as he for a wonder,
 half bird and half mouse!
 God made all the creatures and gave them
 our love and our fear, —
 To give sign, we and they are his children,
 one family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reap-
 ers, their wine-song, when hand
 Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good
 friendship, and great hearts expand 50
 And grow one in the sense of this world's
 life. — And then, the last song
 When the dead man is praised on his jour-
 ney: "Bear, bear him along,
 With his few faults shut up like dead
 flowerets! Are balm seeds not here
 To console us? The land has none left
 such as he on the bier.
 Oh, would we might keep thee, my
 brother!" — And then, the glad
 chaunt 55
 Of the marriage: first go the young maid-
 ens; next, she whom we vaunt
 As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling. —
 And then, the great march
 Wherein man runs to man to assist him,
 and buttress an arch
 Naught can break: who shall harm them,
 our friends? — Then, the chorus in-
 toned —

As the Levites go up to the altar in glory
 enthroned. 60
 But I stopped here: for here in the dark-
 ness Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such
 silence, and listened apart:
 And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shud-
 dered; and sparkles 'gan dart
 From the jewels that woke in his turban, at
 once with a start, —
 All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies
 courageous at heart. 65
 So the head: but the body still moved not,
 still hung there erect.
 And I bent once again to my playing, pur-
 sued it unchecked,
 As I sang: —

IX

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor!
 No spirit feels waste,
 Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor
 sinew unbraced.
 Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping
 from rock up to rock; 70
 The strong rending of boughs from the fir-
 tree; the cool silver shock
 Of the plunge in a pool's living water; the
 hunt of the bear;
 And the sultriness showing the lion is
 couched in his lair.
 And the meal, — the rich dates yellowed
 over with gold dust divine,
 And the locust-flesh steeped in the
 pitcher, the full draught of wine; 75
 And the sleep in the dried river-channel,
 where bulrushes tell
 That the water was wont to go warbling
 so softly and well.
 How good is man's life, the mere living!
 how fit to employ
 All the heart and the soul and the senses
 forever in joy! —
 Hast thou loved the white locks of thy
 father, whose sword thou didst
 guard 80

When he trusted thee forth with the
armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy
mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed; and
hear her faint tongue
Joining in, while it could, to the witness,
'Let one more attest:
I have lived, seen God's hand through a
lifetime, and all was for best?' 85
Then they sung through their tears in
strong triumph, not much, but the
rest. —
And thy brothers, the help and the contest,
the working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-
bundles, the spirit strained true;
And the friends of thy boyhood, — that
boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise, and wealth of the future
beyond the eye's scope: 90
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a
people is thine;
And all gifts, which the world offers
singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength;
love and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor
and lets the gold go);
High ambition and deeds which surpass it,
fame crowning them; — all 95
Brought to blaze on the head of one crea-
ture, — King Saul!"

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit, —
heart, hand, harp and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow,
each bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for —
as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service,
strains through its array, 100
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot —
"Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow.
Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the centre,
was struck by his name.

Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy
summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, — the last to with-
stand her, that held (he alone, 105
While the vale laughed in freedom and
flowers) on a broad bust of
stone?
A year's snow bound about for a breast-
plate, — leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunder-
ously down to his feet:
And there fronts you, stark, black, but
alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings
of ages untold, — 110
Yea, each harm got in fighting your bat-
tles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tem-
pest, — all hail, there they are!
— Now again to be softened with verdure,
again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young
to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer. —
One long shudder thrilled 115
All the tent till the very air tingled; then
sank and was stilled
At the King's self left standing before me,
released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to
traverse 'twixt hope and despair;
Death was past, life not come: so he
waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, — helped the eyes left too
vacant forthwith to remand 120
To their place what new objects should
enter: 'twas Saul as before.
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes;
nor was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn ye
watch from the shore,
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean — a
sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern
silence, o'erlap and entwine 125
Base with base, to knit strength more
intensely: so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings sub-
sided.

XI

What spell or what charm,
 (For a while there was trouble within
 me), what next should I urge
 To sustain him where song had restored
 him? Song filled to the verge
 His cup with the wine of this life, pressing
 all that it yields 130
 Of mere fruitage, the strength and the
 beauty — beyond, on what fields
 Glean a vintage more potent and perfect,
 to brighten the eye
 And bring blood to the lip, and commend
 them the cup they put by?
 He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not:
 he lets me praise life,
 Gives assent, — yet would die, for his own
 part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
 Which had come long ago on the pasture,
 when round me the sheep 136
 Fed in silence — above, the one eagle
 wheeled slow as in sleep;
 And I lay in my hollow, and mused on the
 world that might lie
 'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip
 'twixt the hill and the sky:
 And I laughed, — "Since my days are
 ordained to be passed with my
 flocks, 140
 Let me people at least, with my fancies, the
 plains and the rocks;
 Dream the life I am never to mix with;
 and image the show
 Of mankind as they live in those fashions
 I hardly shall know!
 Schemes of life, its best rules and right
 uses; the courage that gains,
 And the prudence that keeps, what men
 strive for." And now these old
 trains 145
 Of vague thought came again; I grew
 surer; so, once more the string
 Of my harp made response to my spirit,
 as thus: —

XIII

"Yea, my King,"
 I began, — "thou dost well in rejecting
 mere comforts that spring
 From the mere mortal life held in common
 by man and by brute:
 In our flesh grows the branch of this life,
 in our soul it bears fruit. 150
 Thou hast marked the slow rise of the
 tree, — how its stem trembled first
 Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's
 antler; then safely outburst
 The fan-branches all round; and thou
 mindest when these too, in turn,
 Broke abloom, and the palm-tree seemed
 perfect; yet more was to learn, —
 E'en the good that comes in with the
 palm-fruit. Our dates shall we
 slight, 155
 When their juice brings a cure for all
 sorrow? or care for the plight
 Of the palm's self, whose slow growth
 produced them? Not so! stem and
 branch
 Shall decay, nor be known in their place;
 while the palm-tree shall staunch
 Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I
 pour thee such wine:
 Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for!
 the spirit be thine! 160
 By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome
 thee, thou still shalt enjoy
 More indeed, than at first, when incon-
 scious, the life of a boy.
 Crush that life, and behold its wine run-
 ning! Each deed thou hast done
 Dies, revives, goes to work in the world!
 until e'en as the sun
 Looking down on the earth, though clouds
 spoil him, though tempests efface, 165
 Can find nothing his own deed produced
 not, must everywhere trace
 The results of his past summer-prime, —
 so, each ray of thy will,
 Every flash of thy passion and prowess,
 long over, shall thrill
 Thy whole people, the countless, with
 ardor; till they too give forth

A like cheer to their sons, who, in turn, fill
 the South and the North 170
 With the radiance thy deed was the germ
 of. Carouse in the past!
 But the license of age has its limit; thou
 diest at last.
 As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the
 rose at her height,
 So with man — so his power and his beauty
 forever take flight.
 No! Again a long draught of my soul-
 wine! Look forth o'er the years! 175
 Thou hast done now with eyes for the
 actual: begin with the seer's!
 Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale
 make his tomb: bid arise
 A gray mountain of marble heaped four-
 square, till, built to the skies,
 Let it mark where the great First King
 slumbers, — whose fame would ye
 know?
 Up above, see the rock's naked face, where
 the record shall go 180
 In great characters cut by the scribe, —
 Such was Saul, so he did;
 With the sages directing the work, by the
 populace chid,
 For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised
 there! Which fault to amend,
 In the grove with his kind grows the cedar,
 whereon they shall spend
 (See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their
 praise, and record 185
 With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,
 — the stateman's great word
 Side by side with the poet's sweet com-
 ment. The river's awave
 With smooth paper-reeds grazing each
 other when prophet-winds rave:
 So the pen gives unborn generations their
 due and their part
 In thy being! Then, first of the mighty,
 thank God that thou art!" 190

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou
 who didst grant me that day, —
 And before it not seldom hast granted, —
 thy help to essay,

Carry on, and complete an adventure —
 my shield and my sword!
 In that act where my soul was thy servant,
 thy word was my word —
 Still be with me; who, then at the summit
 of human endeavor, — 195
 And scaling the highest, man's thought
 could, — gazed hopeless as ever
 On the new stretch of heaven above me:
 till, mighty to save,
 Just one lift of thy hand cleared that dis-
 tance — God's throne from man's
 grave!
 Let me tell out my tale to its ending — my
 voice to my heart,
 Which can scarce dare believe in what
 marvels last night I took part, 200
 As this morning I gather the fragments,
 alone with my sheep,
 And still fear lest the terrible glory
 evanish like sleep!
 For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while
 Hebron upheaves
 The dawn struggling with night on his
 shoulder; and Kidron retrieves
 Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

xv

I say, then, — my song 205
 While I sang thus, assuring the monarch,
 and ever more strong
 Made a proffer of good to console him, —
 he slowly resumed
 His old motions and habitudes kingly. The
 right hand replumed
 His black locks to their wonted com-
 posure, adjusted the swathes
 Of his turban; and see, — the huge sweat
 that his countenance bathes, 210
 He wipes off with the robe; and he girds
 now his loins as of yore,
 And feels slow for the armlets of price,
 with the clasp set before.
 He is Saul ye remember in glory, — ere
 error had bent
 The broad brow from the daily com-
 munion; and still, though much
 spent

Be the life and the bearing that front you,
 the same God did choose 215
 To receive what a man may waste, desecrate,
 never quite lose.
 So sank he along by the tent-prop till,
 stayed by the pile
 Of his armor and war-cloak and garments,
 he leaned there awhile,
 And sat out my singing, — one arm round
 the tent-prop, to raise
 His bent head, and the other hung slack
 — till I touched on the praise 220
 I foresaw from all men in all time, to the
 man patient there;
 And thus ended, the harp falling forward.
 Then first I was 'ware
 That he sat, as I say, with my head just
 above his vast knees
 Which were thrust out on each side around
 me, like oak roots which please
 To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I
 looked up to know 225
 If the best I could do had brought solace.
 He spoke not, but slow
 Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he
 laid it with care
 Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on
 my brow: through my hair
 The large fingers were pushed, and he bent
 back my head, with kind power —
 All my face back, intent to peruse it, as
 men do a flower. 230
 Thus held he me there with his great eyes
 that scrutinized mine —
 And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but
 where was the sign?
 I yearned, — "Could I help thee, my
 father, inventing a bliss,
 I would add, to that life of the past, both
 the future, and this:
 I would give thee new life altogether, as
 good, ages hence, 235
 As this moment, — had love but the war-
 rant, love's heart to dispense!"

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp
 more — no song more! Outbroke: —

XVII

"I have gone the whole round of creation:
 I saw and I spoke.
 I, a work of God's hand for that purpose,
 received in my brain,
 And pronounced on, the rest of his hand-
 work, — returned him again 240
 His creation's approval or censure; I spoke
 as I saw.
 I report, as a man may of God's work:
 all's love, yet all's law.
 Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me.
 Each faculty tasked
 To perceive him, has gained an abyss,
 where a dewdrop was asked.
 Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels
 at Wisdom laid bare. 245
 Have I forethought? how purblind, how
 blank to the Infinite Care!
 Do I task any faculty highest, to image
 success?
 I but open my eyes, — and perfection, no
 more and no less,
 In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me: and
 God is seen God
 In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the
 soul, and the clod. 250
 And thus looking within and around me, I
 ever renew
 (With that stoop of the soul which, in
 bending, upraises it too)
 The submission of man's nothing-perfect
 to God's all-complete,
 As, by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb
 to his feet.
 — Yet with all this abounding experi-
 ence, this deity known, 255
 I shall dare to discover some province,
 some gift of my own!
 There's a faculty pleasant to exercise,
 hard to hoodwink,
 I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh
 as I think)
 Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it,
 wot ye, I worst
 E'en the Giver in one gift: — behold, I
 could love if I durst! 260

But I sink the pretension, as fearing a man
may o'ertake

God's own speed in the one way of love: I
abstain for love's sake!

—What, my soul? see thus far and no
farther? when doors, great and
small,

Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch,
should the hundredth appal?

In the least things have faith, yet distrust
in the greatest of all? 265

Do I find love so full in my nature, God's
ultimate gift,

That I doubt his own love can compete
with it? Here, the parts shift?

Here, the creature surpass the Creator, —
the end, what Began?

Would I fain, in my impotent yearning, do
all for this man,

And dare doubt He alone shall not help
him, who yet alone can? 270

Would it ever have entered my mind, —
the bare will, much less power, —

To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the
marvellous dower

Of the life he was gifted and filled with?
to make such a soul,

Such a body, and then such an earth for
inspiring the whole?

—And doth it not enter my mind (as
my warm tears attest), 275

These good things being given, to go on,
and give one more, the best?

Ay, to save and redeem and restore him,
maintain at the height

This perfection, — succeed with life's day-
spring death's minute of night?

Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch
Saul the mistake,

Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now —
and bid him awake 280

From the dream, the probation, the prelude,
to find himself set

Clear and safe in new light and new life,
— a new harmony yet

To be run, and continued, and ended —
who knows? — or endure!

The man taught enough by life's dream, of
the rest to make sure:

By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning
intensified bliss; 285

And the next world's reward and repose,
by the struggles in this.

XVIII

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest,
'tis I who receive:

In the first is the last, in thy will is my
power to believe.

All's one gift: thou canst grant it, more-
over, as prompt to my prayer

As I breathe out this breath, as I open
these arms to the air. 290

From thy will stream the worlds, life and
nature, thy dread Sabaoth:

I will? — the mere atoms despise me!
Why am I not loth

To look that, even that, in the face too?
Why is it I dare

Think but lightly of such impuissance?
What stops my despair?

This: — 'tis not what man Does which
exalts him, but what man Would
do! 295

See the King — I would help him but can-
not, the wishes fall through.

Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow,
grow poor to enrich, —

To fill up his life, starve my own out, — I
would; knowing which,

I know that my service is perfect. Oh,
speak through me now!

Would I suffer for him that I love? So
wouldst thou — so wilt thou! 300

So shall crown thee the topmost, in-
effablest, uttermost crown —

And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor
leave, up nor down,

One spot for the creature to stand in! It
is by no breath,

Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation
joins issue with death!

As thy Love is discovered almighty,
almighty be proved 305

Thy power, that exists with and for it, of
being Beloved!

He who did most, shall bear most: the
strongest shall stand the most weak.

'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry
 for! my flesh, that I seek
 In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O
 Saul, it shall be
 A Face like my face that receives thee; a
 Man like to me. 310
 Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever:
 a Hand like this hand
 Shall throw open the gates of new life to
 thee! See the Christ stand!"

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way
 home in the night.
 There were witnesses, cohorts, about me,
 to left and to right, —
 Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the
 alive, the aware: 315
 I repressed, I got through them as hardly,
 as strugglingly there,
 As a runner beset by the populace famished
 for news —
 Life or death. The whole earth was
 awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
 And the stars of night beat with emotion,
 and tingled and shot
 Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowl-
 edge. But I fainted not; 320
 For the Hand still impelled me at once and
 supported, suppressed
 All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet,
 and holy behest,
 Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the
 earth sank to rest.
 Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had
 withered from earth —
 Not so much, but I saw it die out in the
 day's tender birth: 325
 In the gathered intensity brought to the
 gray of the hills;
 In the shuddering forests' held breath; in
 the sudden wind-thrills;
 In the startled wild beasts that bore off, —
 each with eye sidling still,
 Though averted with wonder and dread; in
 the birds stiff and chill
 That rose heavily, as I approached them,
 made stupid with awe; 330

E'en the serpent that slid away silent, —
 he felt the new law.
 The same stared in the white humid faces
 upturned by the flowers,
 The same worked in the heart of the cedar
 and moved the vine-bowers:
 And the little brooks, witnessing, mur-
 mured, persistent and low, —
 With their obstinate, all but hushed
 voices, — "E'en so, it is so!" 335

"DE GUSTIBUS —"

(1855)

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
 (If our loves remain),
 In an English lane,
 By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
 Hark, those two in the hazel coppice, — 5
 A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
 Making love, say —
 The happier they!
 Draw yourself up from the light of the
 moon,
 And let them pass, — as they will too
 soon, 10
 With the beanflowers' boon,
 And the blackbird's tune,
 And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
 Is a castle, precipice-encurled, 15
 In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
 Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
 (If I get my head from out the mouth
 O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
 And come again to the land of lands), 20
 In a sea-side house to the farther South:
 Where the baked cicala dies of drouth;
 And one sharp tree — 'tis a cypress —
 stands,
 By the many hundred years red-rusted,
 Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted, —
 My sentinel to guard the sands 26
 To the water's edge. For, what expands
 Before the house, but the great opaque
 Blue breadth of sea without a break?
 While, in the house, forever crumbles 30

Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
 From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
 A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
 Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
 And says there's news today: the king 35
 Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
 Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling—
 She hopes they have not caught the felons.

Italy, my Italy!
 Queen Mary's saying serves for me — 40
 (When fortune's malice
 Lost her, Calais):
 Open my heart and you will see
 Graved inside of it, "Italy."
 Such lovers old are I and she: 45
 So it always was, so shall ever be!

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON
 OF QUALITY)
 (1855)

Had I but plenty of money, money enough
 and to spare,
 The house for me, no doubt, were a house
 in the city-square:
 Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at
 the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, — something
 to hear, at least!
 There, the whole day long, one's life is a
 perfect feast: 5
 While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it,
 no more than a beast.

Well, now, look at our villa! stuck like the
 horn of a bull
 Just on a mountain edge as bare as the
 creature's skull,
 Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a
 leaf to pull! —
 I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the
 hair's turned wool! 10

But the city, oh the city, — the square with
 the houses! Why?
 They are stone-faced, white as a curd, —
 there's something to take the eye;
 Houses in four straight lines, not a single
 front awry!
 You watch who crosses and gossips, who
 saunters, who hurries by —
 Green blinds, as a matter of course, to
 draw when the sun gets high — 15
 And the shops with fanciful signs which
 are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over
 in March by rights,
 'Tis May, perhaps, ere the snow shall have
 withered well off the heights:
 You've the brown ploughed land before,
 where the oxen steam and wheeze;
 And the hills over-smoked behind by the
 faint gray olive-trees. 20

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've
 summer all at once:
 In a day he leaps complete, with a few
 strong April suns.
 'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce
 risen three fingers well,
 The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows
 out its great red bell
 Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the
 children to pick and sell. 25

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a
 fountain to spout and splash!
 In the shade, it sings and springs: in the
 shine, such foambows flash
 On the horses with curling fish-tails, that
 prance and paddle and pash
 Round the lady atop in her conch — fifty
 gazers do not abash,
 Though all that she wears is some weeds
 round her waist in a sort of sash. 30

All the year long at the villa, nothing to
 see, though you linger!
 Except yon cypress that points like death's
 lean lifted forefinger.

Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix
i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrud the stinking hemp till the stalks of
it seem a-tingle.

Late August or early September, the stun-
ning cicala is shrill, 35
And the bees keep their tiresome whine
round the resinous firs on the
hill. —

Enough of the seasons! I spare you the
months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the
blessèd church-bells begin.

No sooner the bells leave off than the dili-
gence rattles in:

You get the pick of the news, and it costs
you never a pin. 40

By and by there's the travelling doctor
gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;

Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the
market beneath.

At the post-office, such a scene-picture —
the new play, piping hot!

And a notice how, only this morning, three
liberal thieves were shot.

Above it, behold the Archbishop's most
fatherly of rebukes; 45

And beneath, with his crown and his lion,
some little new law of the Duke's!

Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the
Reverend Don So-and-so,

Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint
Jerome, and Cicero,

"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhym-
ing), "the skirts of Saint Paul has
reached,

Having preached us those six Lent-
lectures more unctuous than ever be
preached." — 50

Noon strikes: here sweeps the procession!
our Lady borne smiling and smart

With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and
seven swords stuck in her heart!

Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-
te-tootle* the fife:

No keeping one's haunches still — it's the
greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear — it's dear! fowls,
wine, at double the rate! 55

They have clapped a new tax upon salt;
and what oil pays passing the gate,

It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa
for me, not the city!

Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still
— ah, the pity, the pity! —

Look, two and two go the priests, then the
monks with cowls and sandals,

And the penitents dressed in white shirts,
a-holding the yellow candles: 60

One, he carries a flag up straight, and
another a cross with handles;

And the Duke's guard brings up the rear,
for the better prevention of scandals:

Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-
te-tootle* the fife.

Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no
such pleasure in life!

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

(1855)

Where the quiet-colored end of evening
smiles

Miles and miles

On the solitary pastures where our sheep,
Half-asleep,

Tinkle homeward through the twilight,
stray or stop 5

As they crop —

Was the site, once, of a city great and
gay,

(So they say), —

Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since 10

Held his court in, gathered councils, wield-
ing far

Peace or war.

Now, — the country does not even boast a
tree,

As you see,

To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain
rills

From the hills

Intersect and give a name to (else they
run

Into one) —

Where the domed and daring palace shot
its spires

Up like fires, 20

O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall

Bounding all,

Made of marble, men might march on nor
be pressed

Twelve abreast. 25

And such plenty and perfection, see, of
grass

Never was!

Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'er-
spreads

And embeds

Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone — 30

Where a multitude of men breathed joy
and woe

Long ago;

Lust of glory pricked their hearts up,
dread of shame

Struck them tame;

And that glory and that shame alike, the
gold 35

Bought and sold.

Now, — the single little turret that re-
mains

On the plains,

By the caper overrooted, by the gourd

Overscored, 40

While the patching houseleek's head of
blossom winks

Through the chinks —

Marks the basement whence a tower in
ancient time

Sprang sublime;

And a burning ring, all round, the chariots
traced 45

As they raced;

And the monarch and his minions and his
dames

Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored
eve

Smiles to leave 50

To their folding, all our many-tinkling
fleece,

In such peace;

And the slopes and rills in undistinguished
gray

Melt away —

That a girl with eager eyes and yellow
hair 55

Waits me there

In the turret, whence the charioteers
caught soul

For the goal,

When the king looked, — where she looks
now, breathless, dumb

Till I come. 60

But he looked upon the city, every side,

Far and wide,

All the mountains topped with temples, all
the glades'

Colonnades,

All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts, — and
then, 65

All the men! —

When I do come, she will speak not; she
will stand,

Either hand

On my shoulder, give her eyes the first
embrace

Of my face, 70

Ere we rush, — ere we extinguish sight
and speech

Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters
forth

South and North,

And they built their gods a brazen pillar
high 75

As the sky,

Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full
force —

Gold, of course.

Oh heart! oh blood that freezes. blood that
burns!

Earth's returns 80

For whole centuries of folly, noise, and
sin!

Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and
the rest!

Love is best.

MEMORABILIA~

(1855)

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that,
And also you are living after;
And the memory I started at —
My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no
doubt, 10
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

For there I picked up on the heather,
And there I put inside my breast,
A moulted feather, — an eagle-feather! 15
Well, I forget the rest.

MISCONCEPTIONS

(1855)

This is a spray the Bird clung to,
Making it blossom with pleasure,
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
Fit for her nest and her treasure.
Oh, what a hope beyond measure 5
Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet
hung to, —
So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!

This is a heart the Queen leaned on,
Thrilled in a minute erratic,
Ere the true bosom she bent on, 10
Meet for love's regal dalmatic.
Oh, what a fancy ecstatic

Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer
went on —
Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent
on!

MY STAR

(1855)

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red, 5
Now a dart of blue:
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower,
hangs furled: 10
They must solace themselves with the
Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a
world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; there-
fore I love it.

WOMEN AND ROSES

(1855)

I dream of a red-rose tree.
And which of its roses three
Is the dearest rose to me?
Round and round, — like a dance of snow
In a dazzling drift, — as its guardians, go 5
Floating the women faded for ages,
Sculptured in stone, on the poet's pages.
Then follow women fresh and gay,
Living and loving and loved today.
Last, in the rear, flee the multitude of
maidens, 10
Beauties yet unborn. — And all, to one
cadence,
They circle their rose on my rose-tree.

Dear rose, thy term is reached;
Thy leaf hangs loose and bleached:
Bees pass it unimpeached. 15
Stay then, stoop, since I cannot climb, —
You, great shapes of the antique time!

How shall I fix you, fire you, freeze you,
Break my heart at your feet to please
you?

Oh, to possess and be possessed! 20
Hearts that beat 'neath each pallid breast!
Once but of love, the poesy, the passion,
Drink but once and die! — In vain: the
same fashion,

They circle their rose on my rose-tree.

Dear rose, thy joy's undimmed, 25
Thy cup is ruby-rimmed,
Thy cup's heart nectar-brimmed.

Deep, as drops from a statue's plinth
The bee sucked in by the hyacinth,
So will I bury me while burning, 30

Quench like him at a plunge my yearning,
Eyes in your eyes, lips on your lips!
Fold me fast where the cincture slips,
Prison all my soul in eternities of pleasure,
Girdle me for once! — But no: the old
measure, 35

They circle their rose on my rose-tree.

Dear rose without a thorn,
Thy bud's the babe unborn,
First streak of a new morn.
Wings, lend wings for the cold, the
clear! 40

What is far conquers what is near.
Roses will bloom, nor want beholders,
Sprung from the dust where our flesh
moulders.

What shall arrive with the cycle's change?
A novel grace and a beauty strange. 45
I will make an Eve, be the artist that
began her,

Shaped her to his mind! — Alas! in like
manner

They circle their rose on my rose-tree.

LOVE IN A LIFE

(1855)

Room after room,
I hunt the house through
We inhabit together.
Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt
find her, —

Next time, herself! — not the trouble be-
hind her 5

Left in the curtain, the couch's perfume!
As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath
blossomed anew;

Yon looking-glass gleamed at the wave
of her feather.

Yet the day wears,
And door succeeds door: 10

I try the fresh fortune, —
Range the wide house from the wing to
the centre.

Still the same chance! she goes out as I
enter.

Spend my whole day in the quest, — who
cares?

But 'tis twilight, you see, — with such
suites to explore, 15

Such closets to search, such alcoves to
importune!

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

(1855)

I wonder do you feel today
As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, — to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May? 5

For me, — I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalized me many times
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw,
Mocking, across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go. 10

Help me to hold it! First it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's
cleft,

Some old tomb's ruin; yonder weed
Took up the floating weft, 15

Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles — blind and green they
grope

Among the honey-meal; and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast! 20

The champaign with its endless fleece
 Of feathery grasses everywhere!
 Silence and passion, joy and peace,
 An everlasting wash of air,—
 Rome's ghost since her decease. 25

Such life here, through such lengths of
 hours:

Such miracles performed in play,
 Such primal naked forms of flowers,
 Such letting nature have her way,
 While heaven looks from its towers! 30

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
 Let us be unashamed of soul,
 As earth lies bare to heaven above!
 How is it under our control
 To love or not to love? 35

I would that you were all to me,
 You that are just so much, no more.
 Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
 Where does the fault lie? What the
 core
 O' the wound, since wound must be? 40

I would I could adopt your will,
 See with your eyes, and set my heart
 Beating by yours, and drink my fill
 At your soul's springs,—your part my
 part
 In life, for good and ill. 45

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
 Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
 Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the
 rose
 And love it more than tongue can
 speak—
 Then the good minute goes. 50

Already how am I so far
 Out of that minute? Must I go
 Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
 Onward, whenever light winds blow,
 Fixed by no friendly star? 55

Just when I seemed about to learn!
 Where is the thread now? Off again!
 The old trick! Only I discern—
 Infinite passion, and the pain
 Of finite hearts that yearn. 60

IN THREE DAYS

(1855)

So, I shall see her in three days
 And just one night,—but nights are
 short,—
 Then two long hours, and that is morn.
 See how I come, unchanged, unworn!
 Feel, where my life broke off from thine, 5
 How fresh the splinters keep and fine,—
 Only a touch and we combine!

Too long, this time of year, the days!
 But nights,—at least the nights are short.
 As night shows where her one moon is, 10
 A hand's-breadth of pure light and bliss,
 So life's night gives my lady birth
 And my eyes hold her! What is worth
 The rest of heaven, the rest of earth?

O loaded curls, release your store 15
 Of warmth and scent, as once before
 The tingling hair did, lights and darks
 Outbreaking into fairy sparks,
 When under curl and curl I pried
 After the warmth and scent inside, 20
 Through lights and darks how manifold,—

The dark inspired, the light controlled!
 As early Art embrowns the gold.

What great fear, should one say, "Three
 days
 That change the world might change as
 well 25
 Your fortune; and if joy delays,
 Be happy that no worse befell!"
 What small fear, if another says,
 "Three days and one short night beside
 May throw no shadow on your ways: 30
 But years must teem with change untried,
 With chance not easily defied,

With an end somewhere undescried."
 No fear! — or if a fear be born
 This minute, it dies out in scorn. 35
 Fear? I shall see her in three days
 And one night, now the nights are short,
 Then just two hours, and that is morn.

IN A YEAR

(1855)

Never any more,
 While I live,
 Need I hope to see his face
 As before.
 Once his love grown chill, 5
 Mine may strive:
 Bitterly we re-embrace,
 Single still.

Was it something said,
 Something done, 10
 Vexed him? Was it touch of hand,
 Turn of head?
 Strange! that very way
 Love begun:
 I as little understand 15
 Love's decay.

When I sewed or drew,
 I recall
 How he looked as if I sung, —
 Sweetly too. 20
 If I spoke a word,
 First of all
 Up his cheek the color sprung,
 Then he heard.

Sitting by my side, 25
 At my feet, —
 So he breathed but air I breathed, —
 Satisfied!
 I, too, at love's brim
 Touched the sweet: 30
 I would die if death bequeathed
 Sweet to him.

"Speak, I love thee best!"
 He exclaimed:
 "Let thy love my own foretell!" 35
 I confessed:

"Clasp my heart on thine
 Now unblamed,
 Since upon thy soul as well
 Hangeth mine!" 40

Was it wrong to own,
 Being truth?
 Why should all the giving prove
 His alone?
 I had wealth and ease, 45
 Beauty, youth:
 Since my lover gave me love,
 I gave these.

That was all I meant, —
 To be just, 50
 And, the passion I had raised,
 To content.
 Since he chose to change
 Gold for dust,
 If I gave him what he praised 55
 Was it strange?

Would he loved me yet,
 On and on,
 While I found some way undreamed —
 Paid my debt! 60
 Gave more life and more,
 Till, all gone,
 He should smile: "She never seemed
 Mine before.

"What, she felt the while, — 65
 Must I think?
 Love's so different with us men!"
 He should smile:
 "Dying for my sake, —
 White and pink! 70
 Can't we touch these bubbles, then,
 But they break?" —

Dear, the pang is brief:
 Do thy part,
 Have thy pleasure! — How perplexed 75
 Grows belief!
 Well, this cold clay clod
 Was man's heart:
 Crumble it, and what comes next?
 Is it God? 80

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

(1855)

Let's contend no more, Love,
 Strive nor weep:
 All be as before, Love,—
 Only, sleep!

What so wild as words are? 5
 I and thou
 In debate, as birds are,—
 Hawk on bough!

See the creature stalking 10
 While we speak!
 Hush and hide the talking,
 Cheek on cheek!

What so false as truth is,
 False to thee?
 Where the serpent's tooth is 15
 Shun the tree—

Where the apple reddens
 Never pry—
 Lest we lose our Edens,
 Eve and I. 20

Be a god and hold me
 With a charm!
 Be a man and fold me
 With thine arm!

Teach me,—only teach, Love! 25
 As I ought
 I will speak thy speech, Love,
 Think thy thought—

Meet, if thou require it,
 Both demands, 30
 Laying flesh and spirit
 In thy hands.

That shall be tomorrow,
 Not tonight:
 I must bury sorrow 35
 Out of sight:

— Must a little weep, Love,
 (Foolish me!),
 And so fall asleep, Love,
 Loved by thee. 40

RESPECTABILITY

(1855)

Dear, had the world in its caprice
 Deigned to proclaim, "I know you both,
 Have recognized your plighted troth,
 Am sponsor for you: live in peace!"—
 How many precious months and years 5
 Of youth had passed, that speed so fast,
 Before we found it out at last,
 The world, and what it fears?

How much of priceless life were spent
 With men that every virtue decks, 10
 And women models of their sex,
 Society's true ornament,—
 Ere we dared wander, nights like this,
 Through wind and rain, and watch the
 Seine,
 And feel the Boulevard break again 15
 To warmth and light and bliss?

I know! the world proscribes not love;
 Allows my finger to caress
 Your lips' contour and downiness,
 Provided it supply a glove. 20
 The world's good word!—The Institute!
 Guizot receives Montalembert!
 Eh? Down the court three lampions
 flare:
 Put forward your best foot!

THE STATUE AND THE BUST

(1855)

There's a palace in Florence the world
 knows well,
 And a statue watches it from the square;
 And this story of both do our townsmen
 tell:—

Ages ago, a lady there,
At the farthest window facing the East, 5
Asked, "Who rides by with the royal
air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her
ceased;
She leaned forth, one on either hand;
They saw how the blush of the bride in-
creased—

They felt by its beats her heart ex-
pand— 10
As one at each ear, and both in a breath,
Whispered, "The Great-Duke Ferdi-
nand."

That selfsame instant, underneath,
The Duke rode past in his idle way,
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath. 15

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
Till he threw his head back: "Who is
she?"—
"A bride the Riccardi brings home today."

Hair in heaps lay heavily
Over a pale brow spirit-pure,— 20
Carved like the heart of the coal-black
tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure,—
And vainly sought to dissemble her eyes
Of the blackest black our eyes endure.

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise 25
Filled the fine empty sheath of a man:
The Duke grew straightway brave and
wise.

He looked at her as a lover can.
She looked at him, as one who awakes:
The past was a sleep, and her life be-
gan. 30

Now, love so ordered for both their sakes,
A feast was held that selfsame night
In the pile which the mighty shadow
makes.

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,
But the palace overshadows one, 35
Because of a crime, which may God re-
quite!

To Florence and God the wrong was
done,
Through the first republic's murder there
By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in the
square) 40
Turned in the midst of his multitude
At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man sub-
dued,— 45

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor,—
For the Duke on the lady a kiss con-
ferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
If a word did pass, which I do not
think, 50
Only one out of a thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's
brink,
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bedchamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast, 55
That the door she had passed was shut
on her
Till the final catafalk repassed;

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,
Through a certain window facing the East
She could watch like a convent's chroni-
cler; 60

Since passing the door might lead to a
feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride;
 "Your window and its world suffice," 65
 Replied the tongue; while the heart re-
 plied:

"If I spend the night with that devil
 twice,
 May his window serve as my loop of hell
 Whence a damnèd soul looks on paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well, 70
 Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow,
 Ere I count another ave-bell.

"Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,
 And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim,
 And I save my soul—but not tomor-
 row—" 75

(She checked herself and her eye grew
 dim)

"My father tarries to bless my state:
 I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait?
 Moreover the Duke rides past, I know: 80
 We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept.—Just
 so!
 So we resolve on a thing and sleep:
 So did the lady, ages ago.—

That night the Duke said, "Dear or
 cheap 85
 As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
 To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,
 He beckoned the bridegroom (close on
 call,
 As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove), 90

And smiled: "'Twas a very funeral,
 Your lady will think, this feast of ours,—
 A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno bowers,
 And try if Petraja, cool and green, 95
 Cure last night's faults with this morn-
 ing's flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
 On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
 Said: "Too much favor for me so mean!

"But alas! my lady leaves the South; 100
 Each wind that comes from the Apen-
 nine
 Is a menace to her tender youth:

"Nor a way exists, the wise opine,
 If she quits her palace twice this year,
 To avert the flower of life's decline." 105

Quoth the Duke: "A sage and a kindly
 fear;

Moreover Petraja is cold this spring:
 Be our feast tonight as usual here!"

And then to himself—"Which night shall
 bring
 Thy bride to her lover's embraces,
 fool— 110
 Or I am the fool, and thou art the king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night, nor
 cool;
 For tonight the Envoy arrives from France
 Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my
 tool:

"I need thee still, and might miss, per-
 chance. 115
 Today is not wholly lost, beside,
 With its hope of my lady's countenance:

"For I ride—what should I do but ride?
 And passing her palace, if I list,
 May glance at its window,—well be-
 tide!" 120

So said, so done: nor the lady missed
 One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
 Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit
 kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,
No morrow's sun should arise and set 125
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one day
more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning
wore, — 130
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and earth:
The rose would blow when the storm
passed by. 135

Meantime they could profit in winter's
dearth
By store of fruits that supplant the rose:
The world and its ways have a certain
worth;

And to press a point while these oppose
Were simple policy; better wait: 140
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate
Who daily may ride and pass and look
Where his lady watches behind the grate!

And she — she watched the square like a
book 145
Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook:

When the picture was reached the book
was done,
And she turned from the picture at night
to scheme
Of tearing it out for herself next sun. 150

So weeks grew months, years; gleam by
gleam
The glory dropped from their youth and
love;
And both perceived they had dreamed a
dream;

Which hovered, as dreams do, still above:
But who can take a dream for a truth? 155
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove!

One day, as the lady saw her youth
Depart; and the silver thread that streaked
Her hair; and, worn by the serpent's
tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so
peaked — 160
And wondered who the woman was,
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass —
"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass, 165

"Him, the carver, a hand to aid,
Who fashions the clay no love will
change,
And fixes a beauty never to fade:

"Let Robbia's craft, so apt and strange,
Arrest the remains of young and fair, 170
And rivet them while the seasons range.

"Make me a face on the window there,
Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square!

"And let me think that it may beguile 175
Dreary days which the dead must spend,
Down in their darkness under the aisle,

"To say, 'What matters it at the end?
I did no more while my heart was warm
Than does that image, my pale-faced
friend.' 180

"Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the
brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm, —

"Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine? 185
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine,
With flowers and fruits which leaves en-
lace,
Was set where now is the empty shrine —

(And, leaning out of a bright blue
space, 190
As a ghost might lean from a chink of
sky,
The passionate pale lady's face,

Eying ever, with earnest eye
And quick-turned neck at its breathless
stretch,
Some one who ever is passing by) — 195

The Duke had sighed, like the simplest
wretch
In Florence, "Youth — my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade them
fetch

Some subtle moulder of brazen shapes —
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a
man 200
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

"John of Douay shall effect my plan,
Set me on horseback here aloft,
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

"In the very square I have crossed so
oft: 205
That men may admire, when future suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

"While the mouth and the brow stay brave
in bronze —
Admire and say, 'When he was alive
How he would take his pleasure
once!' 210

"And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen the while, and laugh in my tomb
At idleness which aspires to strive."

So! While these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder, 215
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know, 220
Nor all that chivalry of his,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss, —
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had burned his way through the world
to this. 225

I hear you reproach, "But delay was best,
For their end was a crime." — Oh, a
crime will do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself 230
And prove its worth at a moment's view!

Must a game be played for the sake of
pelf?
Where a button goes, 'twere an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph:

The true has no value beyond the
sham; 235
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table's a hat, and your prize
a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing
it, 240

If you choose to play! — is my principle:
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin: 245
And the sin I impute to each frustrate
ghost

Is, — The unlit lamp and the ungirt loin;
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join)
How strive you? *De te, fabulat* 250

THE PATRIOT

AN OLD STORY

(1855)

It was roses, roses, all the way,
 With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
 The house-roofs seemed to heave and
 sway,

The church-spires flamed, such flags they
 had, —

A year ago, on this very day. 5

The air broke into a mist with bells,
 The old walls rocked with the crowd
 and cries.

Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise
 repels, —

But give me your sun from yonder
 skies!"

They had answered, "And afterward,
 what else?" 10

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
 To give it my loving friends to keep!
 Naught man could do, have I left undone:
 And you see my harvest, — what I reap
 This very day, now a year is run. 15

There's nobody on the house-tops now —
 Just a palsied few at the windows set;
 For the best of the sight is, all allow,
 At the Shambles' Gate, — or, better yet,
 By the very scaffold's foot, I trow. 20

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
 A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
 And I think, by the feel, my forehead
 bleeds,

For they fling, whoever has a mind,
 Stones at me for my year's misdeeds. 25

Thus I entered, and thus I go! —
 In triumphs, people have dropped down
 dead:

"Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
 Me?" God might question. — Now, in-
 stead,

'Tis God shall repay: I am safer so. 30

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING
 IN EUROPE

(1855)

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
 Singing together.

Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar
 thorpes

Each in its tether

Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain, 5
 Cared-for till cock-crow:

Look out if yonder be not day again
 Rimming the rock-row!

That's the appropriate country; there,
 man's thought,

Rarer, intenser, — 10

Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it
 ought, —

Chafes in the censer.

Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and
 crop:

Seek we sepulture

On a tall mountain, cited to the top, 15
 Crowded with culture!

All the peaks soar, but one the rest ex-
 cels;

Clouds overcome it, —

No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
 Circling its summit. 20

Thither our path lies; wind we up the
 heights:

Wait ye the warning?

Our low life was the level's and the
 night's:

He's for the morning!

Step to a tune, square chests, erect each
 head, 25

'Ware the beholders!

This is our master, — famous, calm and
 dead, —

Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling
 thorpe and croft,

Safe from the weather! 30

He whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
 Singing together, —

He was a man born with thy face and
throat,

Lyric Apollo!

Long he lived nameless: how should
Spring take note 35

Winter would follow?

Till lo, the little touch, and youth was
gone!

Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, "New measures, other feet
anon!

My dance is finished?" 40

No, that's the world's way — (Keep the
mountain-side,

Make for the city!)

He knew the signal, and stepped on with
pride

Over men's pity;

Left play for work, and grappled with
the world 45

Bent on escaping.

"What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou
keepest furled?

Show me their shaping,

Theirs who most studied man, the bard
and sage, —

Give!" — So, he gowned him, 50

Straight got by heart that book to its
last page:

Learnèd, we found him,

Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like
lead,

Accents uncertain:

"Time to taste life," another would have
said, 55

"Up with the curtain!"

This man said rather: "Actual life comes
next?

Patience a moment!

Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed
text,

Still there's the comment. 60

Let me know all! Prate not of most or
least,

Painful or easy!

Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the
feast,

Ay, nor feel queasy."

Oh, such a life as he resolved to live, 65

When he had learned it,

When he had gathered all books had to
give! —

Sooner, he spurned it. —

Image the whole, then execute the parts:
Fancy the fabric 70

Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire
from quartz,

Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached: there's
the market-place

Gaping before us.)

Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace 75
(Hearten our chorus!)

That before living he'd learn how to
live —

No end to learning:

Earn the means first — God surely will
contrive

Use for our earning. 80

Others mistrust, and say, "But time
escapes:

Live now or never!"

He said, "What's time? Leave Now for
dogs and apes!

Man has Forever."

Back to his book then: deeper drooped
his head; 85

Calculus racked him:

Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of
lead;

Tussis attacked him.

"Now, master, take a little rest!" — not
he!

(Caution redoubled, 90

Step two abreast, the way winds nar-
rowly!)

Not a whit troubled,

Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon

He, soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst, 95
Sucked at the flagon.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,

Heedless of far gain,

Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain! 100

Was it not great? did not he throw on
God —

He loves the burthen —
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?

Did not he magnify the mind, show
clear 105

Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, — as fools do
here,

Paid by instalment.
He ventured neck or nothing, — heaven's
success

Found, or earth's failure: 110
"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He
answered, "Yes!

Hence with life's pale lure!"
That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:

This high man, with a great thing to
pursue, 115

Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to
one,

His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit. 120

That, has the world here — should he need
the next,

Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unper-
plexed

Seeking shall find him.
So, with the throttling hands of death
at strife, 125

Ground he at grammar;
Still, through the rattle, parts of speech
were rife:

While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's* business — let it be! —
Properly based *Oun* — 130

Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
Dead from the waist down.

Well, here's the platform, here's the
proper place:

Hail to your purlieus,
All ye high fliers of the feathered race, 135
Swallows and curlews!

Here's the top-peak. The multitude be-
low

Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live but Know —
Bury this man there? 140

Here — here's his place, where meteors
shoot, clouds form,

Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with
the storm;

Peace, let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects: 145
Loftily lying,

Leave him, — still loftier than the world
suspects,

Living and dying.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

(1855)

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down, and all shall happen as you
wish.

You turn your face, but does it bring your
heart?

I'll work then for your friend's friend,
never fear, 5

Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own
price,

And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. — Will it? ten-
derly? —

Oh, I'll content him, — but tomorrow,
Love! 10

I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual; and it
seems

As if — forgive, now — should you let me
sit

Here by the window, with your hand in
mine,

And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole, 15
Both of one mind, — as married people
use,

Quietly, quietly, the evening through, —

I might get up tomorrow to my work
 Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
 Tomorrow, how you shall be glad for
 this! 20

Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
 And mine the man's bared breast she curls
 inside.

Don't count the time lost, neither: you
 must serve

For each of the five pictures we require;
 It saves a model. So! keep looking
 so, — 25

My serpentine beauty, rounds on
 rounds! —

How could you ever prick those perfect
 ears,

Even to put the pearl there! Oh, so
 sweet, —

My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
 Which everybody looks on and calls his, 30
 And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
 While she looks — no one's: very dear, no
 less.

You smile? why, there's my picture
 ready made,

There's what we painters call our har-
 mony!

A common grayness silvers every-
 thing, — 35

All in a twilight, you and I alike:
 You, at the point of your first pride in me
 (That's gone you know), — but I, at every
 point;

My youth, my hope, my art, being all
 toned down

To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole. 40
 There's the bell clinking from the chapel-
 top;

That length of convent-wall across the
 way

Holds the trees safer, huddled more in-
 side;

The last monk leaves the garden; days
 decrease,

And autumn grows, autumn in every-
 thing. 45

Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape,
 As if I saw alike my work and self

And all that I was born to be and do,
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's
 hand.

How strange, now, looks the life he makes
 us lead: 50

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
 I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!

This chamber for example — turn your
 head —

All that's behind us! You don't under-
 stand

Nor care to understand about my art, 55
 But you can hear at least when people
 speak.

And that cartoon, the second from the
 door, —

It is the thing, Love! so such things should
 be —

Behold Madonna! — I am bold to say.
 I can do with my pencil what I know, 60
 What I see, what at bottom of my heart
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep —

Do easily, too; when I say, perfectly,
 I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are
 judge,

Who listened to the Legate's talk last
 week; 65

And just as much they used to say in
 France.

At any rate, 'tis easy, all of it!
 No sketches first, no studies; that's long
 past:

I do what many dream of all their lives —
 Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do, 70
 And fail in doing. I could count twenty
 such

On twice your fingers, and not leave this
 town,

Who strive — you don't know how the
 others strive

To paint a little thing like that you
 smeared,

Carelessly passing with your robes
 afloat — 75

Yet do much less, so much less, Someone
 says

(I know his name, no matter), — so much
 less!

Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
 There burns a truer light of God in them,
 In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-
 up brain, 80
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to
 prompt
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's
 hand of mine.
 Their works drop groundward; but them-
 selves, I know,
 Reach many a time a heaven that's shut
 to me, —
 Enter and take their place there sure
 enough, 85
 Though they come back and cannot tell the
 world.
 My works are nearer heaven, but I sit
 here.

The sudden blood of these men! at a
 word, —
 Praise them, it boils; or blame them, it
 boils too.
 I, painting from myself and to myself, 90
 Know what I do, am unmoved by men's
 blame,
 Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
 Morello's outline, there, is wrongly
 traced,
 His hue mistaken: what of that? — or
 else,
 Rightly traced and well ordered: what of
 that? 95
 Speak as they please, what does the moun-
 tain care?
 Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his
 grasp,
 Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-
 gray
 Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
 I know both what I want, and what might
 gain: 100
 And yet how profitless to know; to sigh,
 "Had I been two, another and myself,
 Our head would have o'erlooked the
 world!" No doubt.
 Yonder's a work now, of that famous
 youth,
 The Urbinate, who died five years ago. 105

(Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
 Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
 Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to
 see;
 Reaching, that heaven might so replenish
 him,
 Above and through his art, — for it gives
 way: 110
 That arm is wrongly put — and: there
 again —
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
 Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
 He means right — that, a child may
 understand.
 Still, what an arm! and I could alter
 it: 115
 But all the play, the insight and the
 stretch —
 Out of me, out of me! And wherefore
 out?
 Had you enjoined them on me, given me
 soul,
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
 Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I
 think, — 120
 More than I merit, yes, by many times.
 But had you — oh, with the same perfect
 brow,
 And perfect eyes, and more than perfect
 mouth,
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a
 bird
 The fowler's pipe, and follows to the
 snare — 125
 Had you, with these the same, but brought
 a mind!
 Some women do so. Had the mouth,
 there, urged:
 "God and the glory! never care for gain.
 The present by the future, what is that?
 Live for fame, side by side with
 Agnolo! 130
 Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
 I might have done it for you. So it seems:
 Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
 Beside, incentives come from the soul's
 self;
 The rest avail not. Why do I need
 you? 135

What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
 In this world, who can do a thing, will
 not;
 And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
 Yet the will's somewhat — somewhat, too,
 the power —
 And thus we half-men struggle. At the
 end, 140
 God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.

'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
 That I am something underrated here,
 Poor this long while, — despised, to speak
 the truth.

I dared not, do you know, leave home all
 day, 145

For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
 The best is when they pass and look
 aside;

But they speak sometimes; I must bear it
 all.

Well may they speak! That Francis, that
 first time,

And that long festal year at Fontaine-
 bleau! 150

I surely then could sometimes leave the
 ground,

Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
 In that humane great monarch's golden
 look, —

One finger in his beard or twisted curl
 Over his mouth's good mark that made
 the smile; 155

One arm about my shoulder, round my
 neck;

The jingle of his gold chain in my ear:
 I painting proudly with his breath on
 me, —

All his court round him, seeing with his
 eyes,

Such frank French eyes, and such a fire
 of souls 160

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those
 hearts —

And, best of all, this, this, this face be-
 yond,

This in the background, waiting on my
 work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!

A good time, was it not, my kingly
 days? 165

And had you not grown restless . . . but
 I know —

'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct
 said:

Too live the life grew, golden and not
 gray;

And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should
 tempt

Out of the grange whose four walls make
 his world. 170

How could it end in any other way?

You called me, and I came home to your
 heart:

The triumph was, — to reach and stay
 there; since

I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
 Let my hands frame your face in your
 hair's gold, 175

You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
 "Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;

The Roman's is the better when you pray,
 But still the other's Virgin was his

wife" —

Men will excuse me. I am glad to
 judge 180

Both pictures in your presence; clearer
 grows

My better fortune, I resolve to think.

For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
 Said one day Agnolo, his very self,

To Rafael . . . I have known it all these
 years . . . 185

(When the young man was flaming out his
 thoughts

Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
 Too lifted up in heart because of it):

"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
 Goes up and down our Florence, none
 cares how, 190

Who, were he set to plan and execute
 As you are, pricked on by your popes and
 kings,

Would bring the sweat into that brow of
 yours!"

To Rafael's! — And indeed the arm is
 wrong.

I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see, 195

Give the chalk here — quick, thus the line
should go!

Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! Rub it out!
Still, all I care for,—if he spoke the
truth

(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like
those?), 200

If really there was such a chance, so
lost,—

Is, whether you're — not grateful — but
more pleased.

Well, let me think so. And you smile
indeed!

This hour has been an hour! Another
smile?

If you would sit thus by me every night 205
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you
more.

See, it is settled dusk now: there's a star;
Morello's gone; the watch-lights show the
wall;

The cue-owls speak the name we call them
by. 210

Come from the window, love,—come in,
at last,

Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired
out, 215

The walls become illumined, brick from
brick

Distinct,—instead of mortar, fierce bright
gold,

That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits out-
side? 220

Must see you—you, and not with me?
Those loans?

More gaming debts to pay? you smiled
for that?

Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to
spend?

While hand and eye and something of a
heart

Are left me, work's my ware, and what's
it worth? 225

I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,—
Idle, you call it,—and muse perfectly

How I could paint, were I but back in
France,

One picture, just one more — the Virgin's
face, 230

Not yours this time! I want you at my
side

To hear them — that is, Michel Agnolo —
Judge all I do, and tell you of its worth.
Will you? Tomorrow, satisfy your friend.

I take the subjects for his corridor, 235
Finish the portrait out of hand — there,
there,

And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs: the whole should prove
enough

To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Be-
side,—

What's better and what's all I care
about,— 240

Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what
does he,

The Cousin! what does he to please you
more?

I am grown peaceful as old age tonight.
I regret little, I would change still less. 245
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis! — it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is
said.

My father and my mother died of
want. 250

Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his
lot.

They were born poor, lived poor, and poor
they died:

And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good
son 255

Paint my two hundred pictures — let him
try!

No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes.

You loved me quite enough, it seems tonight.

This must suffice me here. What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance — 260

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover, — the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So — still they over-
come 265

Because there's still Lucrezia, — as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

(1855)

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!

You need not clap your torches to my face.

Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!

What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,

And here you catch me at an alley's end 5
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?

The Carmine's my cloister: hunt it up,
Do, — harry out, if you must show your zeal,

Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole;

And nip each softling of a wee white mouse, 10

Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him company!

Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll take

Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,

And please to know me likewise. — Who am I?

Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend 15

Three streets off — he 's a certain . . .
how d' ye call?

Master — a . . . Cosimo of the Medici.

I' the house that caps the corner. — Boh!
you were best!

Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged,

How you affected such a gullet's-
gripe! — 20

But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves

Pick up a manner nor discredit you:

Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets

And count fair prize what comes into their net? —

He's Judas to a tittle, that man is! 25
Just such a face! — Why, sir, you make amends.

Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hang-dogs go

Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent House that harbors me

(And many more beside, lads! more be-
side!) 30

And all's come square again. — I'd like his face, —

His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern, — for the slave that holds

John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand ("Look you, now," as who should say), 35

And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!

It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!

Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.

What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down, 40

You know them and they take you? like enough!

I saw the proper twinkle in your eye —

"Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let's sit and set things straight now, hip
to haunch.

Here's spring come, and the nights one
makes up bands 45

To roam the town and sing out carnival;
And I've been three weeks shut within
my mew,

A-painting for the great man, saints and
saints

And saints again. I could not paint all
night —

Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh
air. 50

There came a hurry of feet and little
feet,

A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whiffs
of song, —

Flower o' the broom,

Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!

Flower o' the quince, 55

I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?

Flower o' the thyme — and so on. Round
they went.

Scarce had they turned the corner when
a titter

Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight,
— three slim shapes,

And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir,
flesh and blood, 60

That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it
went,

Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture — a dozen knots,

There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and
so dropped, 65

And after them. I came up with the fun
Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well
met, —

Flower o' the rose,

*If I've been merry, what matter who
knows?*

And so as I was stealing back again 70

To get to bed and have a bit of sleep

Ere I rise up tomorrow and go work

On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast

With his great round stone to subdue the
flesh,

You snap me of the sudden. — Ah, I
see! 75

Though your eye twinkles still, you shake
your head:

Mine's shaved — a monk, you say — the
sting's in that!

If Master Cosimo announced himself,
Mum's the word naturally — but a monk!

Come, what am I a beast for? tell us,
now! 80

I was a baby when my mother died
And father died, and left me in the street.

I starved there, God knows how, a year
or two

On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and
shucks,

Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty
day, 85

My stomach being empty as your hat,

The wind doubled me up and down I
went.

Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one
hand

(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew),
And so along the wall, over the bridge, 90

By the straight cut to the convent. Six
words there,

While I stood munching my first bread
that month:

"So, boy, you're minded," quoth the good
fat father,

Wiping his own mouth — 'twas refection-
time —

"To quit this very miserable world? 95

Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of
bread?" thought I:

By no means! Brief, they made a monk of
me:

I did renounce the world, — its pride and
greed,

Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-
house,

Trash such as these poor devils of
Medici 100

Have given their hearts to, — all at eight
years old.

Well, sir, I found in time, you may be
sure,

'Twas not for nothing, — the good bellyful,
 The warm serge and the rope that goes all
 round,
 And day-long blessed idleness beside! 105
 "Let's see what the urchin's fit for" —
 that came next.
 Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
 Such a to-do! They tried me with their
 books:
 Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure
 waste!
Flower o' the clove, 110
All the Latin I construe is "amo," I
love!
 But, mind you, when a boy starves in the
 streets
 Eight years together, as my fortune was,
 Watching folks' faces to know who will
 fling
 The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he
 desires, 115
 And who will curse or kick him for his
 pains;
 Which gentleman, processional and fine,
 Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
 Will wink and let him lift a plate and
 catch
 The droppings of the wax to sell again, 120
 Or holla for the Eight and have him
 whipped—
 How say I? — nay, which dog bites, which
 lets drop
 His bone from the heap of offal in the
 street:
 Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp
 alike,
 He learns the look of things, and none the
 less 125
 For admonition from the hunger-pinch.
 I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
 Which, after I found leisure, turned to
 use.
 I drew men's faces on my copy-books,
 Scrawled them within the antiphony's
 marge, 130
 Joined legs and arms to the long music-
 notes,
 Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and
 B's,

And made a string of pictures of the world
 Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and
 noun —
 On the wall, the bench, the door. The
 monks looked black. 135
 "Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out,
 d' ye say?"
 In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark!
 What if at last we get our man of parts,
 We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
 And Preaching Friars, to do our church up
 fine 140
 And put the front on it that ought to be!"
 And hereupon he bade me daub away.

Thank you! my head being crammed, the
 walls a blank,
 Never was such prompt disburdening.
 First, every sort of monk, the black and
 white, 145
 I drew them, fat and lean; then, folk at
 church,
 From good old gossips waiting to confess
 Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-
 ends, —
 To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
 Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting
 there 150
 With the little children round him in a row
 Of admiration, half for his beard and
 half
 For that white anger of his victim's son
 Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
 Signing himself with the other because of
 Christ 155
 (Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
 After the passion of a thousand years);
 Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her
 head
 (Which the intense eyes looked through),
 came at eve
 On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a
 loaf, 160
 Her pair of earrings and a bunch of
 flowers
 (The brute took growling), prayed, and so
 was gone.
 I painted all, then cried, "'Tis ask and
 have;

Choose, for more's ready!" — laid the ladder flat,
 And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall. 165
 The monks closed in a circle and praised loud, —
 Till checked, taught what to see and not to see,
 Being simple bodies, — "That's the very man!
 Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!
 That woman's like the Prior's niece who comes 170
 To care about his asthma: it's the life!"
 But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and fumed;
 Their betters took their turn to see and say:
 The Prior and the learned pulled a face
 And stopped all that in no time. "How? what's here? 175
 Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
 Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
 As much as pea and pea! it's devil's-game!
 Your business is not to catch men with show,
 With homage to the perishable clay, 180
 But lift them over it, ignore it all,
 Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
 Your business is to paint the souls of men, —
 Man's soul; and it's a fire, smoke . . . no, it's not . . .
 It's vapor done up like a new-born babe! 185
 (In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth) —
 It's . . . well, what matters talking, it's the soul!
 Give us no more of body than shows soul!
 Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,
 That sets us praising, — why not stop with him? 190
 Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head

With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?
 Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!
 Rub all out, try at it a second time.
 Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts, 195
 She's just my niece. . . . Herodias, I would say, —
 Who went and danced, and got men's heads cut off!
 Have it all out!"

Now, is this sense, I ask?
 A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
 So ill the eye can't stop there, must go further 200
 And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white
 When what you put for yellow's simply black;
 And any sort of meaning looks intense
 When all beside itself means and looks naught.
 Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn, 205
 Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
 Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
 Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,
 The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint: — is it so pretty
 You can't discover if it means hope, fear, 210
 Sorrow, or joy? won't beauty go with these?
 Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,
 Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
 And then add soul and heighten them threefold?
 Or say there's beauty with no soul at all 215
 (I never saw it — put the case the same):
 If you get simple beauty and naught else,
 You get about the best thing God invents —

That's somewhat — and you'll find the
soul you have missed,
Within yourself, when you return him
thanks. 220

"Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my
life, in short;
And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken
bounds:

You should not take a fellow eight years
old

And make him swear to never kiss the
girls. 225

I'm my own master, paint now as I
please, —

Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-
house!

Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in
front —

Those great rings serve more purposes
than just

To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse! 230

And yet the old schooling sticks, the old
grave eyes

Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still: "It's art's decline,
my son!

You're not of the true painters, great and
old:

Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find; 235

Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:

Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the
third!"

Flower o' the pine,

*You keep your mistr . . . manners, and
I'll stick to mine!*

I'm not the third, then: bless us, they must
know! 240

Don't you think they're the likeliest to
know,

They with their Latin? So, I swallow my
rage,

Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and
paint

To please them — sometimes do and some-
times don't.

For, doing most, there's pretty sure to
come 245

A turn, some warm eve finds me at my
saints —

A laugh, a cry, the business of the world
(*Flower o' the Peach,*
*Death for us all, and his own life for
each!*), —

And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs
over: 250

The world and life's too big to pass for a
dream,

And I do these wild things in sheer
despite,

And play the fooleries you catch me at,
In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at
grass

After hard years, throws up his stiff heels
so; 255

Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.

What would men have? Do they like
grass or no —

May they or mayn't they? all I want's the
thing

Settled forever one way. As it is, 260

You tell too many lies and hurt your-
self:

You don't like what you only like too
much,

You do like what, if given you at your
word,

You find abundantly detestable.

For me, I think I speak as I was taught; 265

I always see the garden and God there
A-making man's wife: and, my lesson
learned, —

The value and significance of flesh, —

I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me: I'm a beast, I
know. 270

But see, now — why, I see as certainly
As that the morning-star's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We've a young-
ster here

Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and lets no atom
drop. 275

His name is Guidi — he'll not mind the
monks —

They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them
talk —

He picks my practice up: he'll paint apace,
I hope so — though I never live so long,
I know what's sure to follow. You be
judge! 280

You speak no Latin more than I, belike;
However, you're my man, you've seen the
world:

The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights
and shades,

Changes, surprises, — and God made it
all! 285

For what? Do you feel thankful, ay or
no,

For this fair town's face, yonder river's
line,

The mountain round it and the sky
above, —

Much more the figures of man, woman,
child,

These are the frame to? What's it all
about? 290

To be passed over, despised? or dwell
upon,

Wondered at? Oh, this last, of course!
you say —

But why not do as well as say, — paint
these

Just as they are, careless what comes of
it?

God's works — paint any one, and count it
crime 295

To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His
works

Are here already; nature is complete:

Suppose you reproduce her (which you
can't),

There's no advantage! you must beat her,
then."

For, don't you mark? we're made so that
we love 300

First when we see them painted, things we
have passed

Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to
see;

And so they are better, painted, — better
to us.

Which is the same thing. Art was given
for that:

God uses us to help each other so, 305
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed,
now,

Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of
chalk,

And trust me but you should, though!
How much more,

If I drew higher things with the same
truth!

That were to take the Prior's pulpit-
place, 310

Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,
It makes me mad to see what men shall
do

And we in our graves! This world's no
blot for us,

Nor blank; it means intensely, and means
good:

To find its meaning is my meat and
drink. 315

"Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
Strikes in the Prior: "when your meaning's
plain

It does not say to folk, — remember
matins,

Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why,
for this

What need of art at all? A skull and
bones, 320

Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or,
what's best,

A bell to chime the hour with, does as
well.

I painted a Saint Laurence six months
since

At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:
"How looks my painting, now the scaf-
fold's down?"

I ask a brother. — "Hugely!" he returns;
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,
But's scratched and prodded to our heart's
content,

The pious people have so eased their
own 330

With coming to say prayers there in a
rage:

We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.
Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd:
Your painting serves its purpose!"—
Hang the fools! 335

—That is—you'll not mistake an idle word

Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night, which turns

The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now! 340

It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself:

And harken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece—

There's for you! Give me six months:
then go, see 345

Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!

They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint

God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a bowery flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces,
sweet 350

As puff on puff of grated orris-root
When ladies crowd to Church at mid-summer.

And then i' the front, of course a saint or two:

Saint John, because he saves the Florentines;

Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white 355

The convent's friends, and gives them a long day;

And Job, I must have him there past mistake,

The man of Uz (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these

Secured at their devotion, up shall come 360
Out of a corner when you least expect,—
As one by a dark stair into a great light,

Music, and talking,—who but Lippo!
I—

Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck—I'm the man!

Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear? 365

I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,

My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,—

I, in this presence, this pure company!
Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape?

Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing 370

Forward, puts out a soft palm: "Not so fast!"

—Addresses the celestial presence, "Nay,
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he's none of you! Could Saint John, there, draw—

His camel-hair make up a painting-brush? 375

We come to brother Lippo for all that:
Iste perfecit opus!" So, all smile—

I shuffle sideways, with my blushing face,
Under the cover of a hundred wings

Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you're gay 380

And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,

Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off

To some safe bench behind, not letting go
The palm of her, the little lily thing 385

That spoke the good word for me in the nick,

Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say:

And so all's saved for me; and for the church

A pretty picture gained.—Go, six months hence!—

Your hand, sir, and good-bye: no lights, no lights! 390

The street's hushed, and I know my own way back,

Don't fear me! There's the gray beginning. Zooks!

AN EPISTLE

CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCE OF KARSHISH, THE ARAB PHYSICIAN.

(1855)

Karshish, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,

The not-incurious in God's handiwork
(This man's-flesh he hath admirably made,
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,
To coop up and keep down on earth a space 5

That puff of vapor from His mouth, man's soul),

—To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,
Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,
Like me inquisitive how pricks and cracks
Befall the flesh through too much stress and strain, 10

Whereby the wily vapor fain would slip
Back and rejoin its source before the term, —

And aptest in contrivance (under God)
To baffle it by deftly stopping such: —
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home 15

Sends greeting (health and knowledge,
fame with peace)

Three samples of true snake-stone, —
rarer still,

One of the other sort, the melon-shaped
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than drugs);

And writeth now the twenty-second time. 20

My journeyings were brought to Jericho —

Thus I resume. Who studious in our art
Shall count a little labor unrepaid?
I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone

On many a flinty furlong of this land. 25
Also, the country-side is all on fire
With rumors of a marching hitherward:
Some say Vespasian cometh; some, his son.
A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear;

Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls: 30

I cried and threw my staff, and he was gone.

Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,

And once a town declared me for a spy.

But at the end, I reach Jerusalem;

Since this poor covert where I pass the night, 35

This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence

A man with plague-sores at the third degree

Runs till he drops down dead. — Thou laughest here!

'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,
To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip 40
And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.

A viscid choler is observable

In tertians, I was nearly bold to say;

And falling-sickness hath a happier cure
Than our school wots of: there's a spider here 45

Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,

Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-gray back —

Take five and drop them . . . but who knows his mind,

The Syrian runagate I trust this to?

His service payeth me a sublimate 50

Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.

Best wait: I reach Jerusalem at morn,

There set in order my experiences,

Gather what most deserves, and give thee all —

Or I might add, Judæa's gum-tragacanth 55

Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,

Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry, —

In fine, exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease

Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy —

Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at Zoar — 60

But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay: my Syrian blinketh gratefully,
Protesteth his devotion is my price—
Suppose I write what harms not, though
he steal?

I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush, 65
What set me off a-writing first of all.
An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang!
For, be it this town's barrenness— or else
The Man had something in the look of
him—

His case has struck me far more than 'tis
worth. 70

So, pardon if (lest presently I lose,
In the great press of novelty at hand,
The care and pains this somehow stole
from me)

I bid thee take the thing while fresh in
mind,

Almost in sight— for, wilt thou have the
truth? 75

The very man is gone from me but now,
Whose ailment is the subject of dis-
course.

Thus, then, and let thy better wit help all!

'Tis but a case of mania,— subinduced
By epilepsy, at the turning-point 80
Of trance prolonged unduly some three
days:

When, by the exhibition of some drug
Or spell, exorcization, stroke of art
Unknown to me and which 'twere well to
know,

The evil thing out-breaking all at once 85
Left the man whole and sound of body
indeed,—

But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too
wide,

Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
The first conceit that entered might in-
scribe

Whatever it was minded on the wall 90
So plainly,— at that vantage, as it were,
(First come, first served),— that nothing
subsequent

Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls
The just-returned and new-established
soul

Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart 95

That henceforth she will read or these
or none.

And first: the man's own firm conviction
rests

That he was dead (in fact they buried
him) —

That he was dead, and then restored to
life

By a Nazarene physician of his tribe — 100
'Sayeth, the same bade "Rise," and he did
rise.

"Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt cry.
Not so this figment! — not, that such a
fume,

Instead of giving way to time and health,
Should eat itself into the life of life, 105
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones and
all!

For see, how he takes up the after-life.
The man — it is one Lazarus, a Jew,
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
The body's habit wholly laudable; 110
As much, indeed, beyond the common
health

As he were made and put aside to show.
Think, could we penetrate by any drug
And bathe the wearied soul and worried
flesh,

And bring it clear and fair, by three days'
sleep! 115

Whence has the man the balm that
brightens all?

This grown man eyes the world now like
a child.

Some elders of his tribe, I should pre-
mise,

Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
To bear my inquisition. While they
spoke, 120

Now sharply, now with sorrow, — told the
case, —

He listened not, except I spoke to him,
But folded his two hands and let them
talk,

Watching the flies that buzzed: and yet no
fool.

And that's a sample how his years must
go. 125

Look, if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,
Should find a treasure, — can he use the
same
With straitened habits and with tastes
starved small,
And take at once to his impoverished brain
The sudden element that changes
things, 130
That sets the undreamed-of rapture at
his hand
And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned
dust?
Is he not such an one as moves to mirth, —
Warily parsimonious, when no need,
Wasteful as drunkenness at undue
times? 135
All prudent counsel as to what befits
The golden mean, is lost on such an one:
The man's fantastic will is the man's law.

So, here: we call the treasure knowl-
edge, say,
Increased beyond the fleshly faculty, — 140
Heaven opened to a soul while yet on
earth,
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing
heaven:
The man is witless of the size, the sum,
The value in proportion of all things,
Or whether it be little or be much. 145
Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
Assembled to besiege his city now,
And of the passing of a mule with
gourds —
'Tis one! Then take it on the other side,
Speak of some trifling fact, — he will gaze
rapt 150
With stupor at its very littleness
(Far as I see), as if in that indeed
He caught prodigious import, whole re-
sults;
And so will turn to us the bystanders
In ever the same stupor (note this
point) 155
That we too see not with his opened
eyes.
Wonder and doubt come wrongly into
play,
Preposterously, at cross purposes.

Should his child sicken unto death, — why,
look
For scarce abatement of his cheerful-
ness, 160
Or pretermission of the daily craft!
While a word, gesture, glance, from that
same child
At play or in the school or laid asleep,
Will startle him to an agony of fear,
Exasperation, just as like. Demand 165
The reason why — "Tis but a word,"
object,
"A gesture" — he regards thee as our
lord
Who lived there in the pyramid alone
Looked at us (dost thou mind?) when,
being young,
We both would unadvisedly recite 170
Some charm's beginning, from that book of
his,
Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst
All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.
Thou and the child have each a veil alike
Thrown o'er your heads, from under
which ye both 175
Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a
match
Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know!

He holds on firmly to some thread of
life
(It is the life to lead perforcedly)
Which runs across some vast distracting
orb 180
Of glory on either side that meagre
thread;
Which, conscious of, he must not enter
yet, —
The spiritual life around the earthly life.
The law of that is known to him as this:
His heart and brain move there, his feet
stay here. 185
So is the man perplexed with impulses
Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight
on;
Proclaiming what is right and wrong
across,
And not along, this black thread through
the blaze —

"It should be" baulked by "here it cannot be." 190

And oft the man's soul springs into his face,

As if he saw again and heard again

His sage that bade him "Rise" and he did rise.

Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within,

Admonishes: then back he sinks at once 195

To ashes, who was very fire before,

In sedulous recurrence to his trade

Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;

And studiously the humbler for that pride,

Professedly the faultier that he knows 200

God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.

Indeed, the especial marking of the man
Is prone submission to the heavenly will, —

Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.

'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last 205

For that same death which must restore his being

To equilibrium, body loosening soul

Divorced even now by premature full growth:

He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live

So long as God please, and just how God please. 210

He even seeketh not to please God more

(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.

Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach

The doctrine of his sect, whate'er it be, —

Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do: 215

How can he give his neighbor the real ground,

His own conviction? Ardent as he is, —

Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old

"Be it as God please" reassureth him.

I probed the sore as thy disciple should: 220

"How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness

Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march

To stamp out like a little spark thy town,

Thy tribe, thy crazy tale, and thee at once?"

He merely looked with his large eyes on me. 225

The man is apathetic, you deduce?

Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,

Able and weak, affects the very brutes

And birds — how say I? flowers of the field:

As a wise workman recognizes tools 230

In a master's workshop, loving what they make.

Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb;

Only impatient, let him do his best,

At ignorance and carelessness and sin, —

An indignation which is promptly curbed: 235

As when in certain travel I have feigned

To be an ignoramus in our art,

According to some preconceived design,

And happed to hear the land's practitioners,

Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance, 240

Prattle fantastically on disease,

Its cause and cure — and I must hold my peace!

Thou wilt object: — Why have I not ere this

Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene

Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source, 245

Conferring with the frankness that befits?

Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech

Perished in a tumult many years ago,

Accused — our learning's fate — of wizardry,

Rebellion, — to the setting up a rule 250

And creed prodigious, as described to me.

His death, which happened when the earthquake fell

(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss

To occult learning in our lord the sage

Who lived there in the pyramid alone) 255
Was wrought by the mad people — that's
their wont!

On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
To his tried virtue, for miraculous help —
How could he stop the earthquake?
That's their way!

The other imputations must be lies: 260
But take one, though I loathe to give it
thee,

In mere respect for any good man's fame.
(And after all, our patient Lazarus
Is stark mad: should we count on what
he says?

Perhaps not; though in writing to a
leech 265

'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case.)
This man so cured regards the curer, then,
As — God forgive me! — who but God
himself,

Creator and sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it
awhile! 270

'Sayeth that such an one was born and
lived,

Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his
own house,

Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I
know, —

And yet was . . . what I said nor choose
repeat;

And must have so avouched himself, in
fact, 275

In hearing of this very Lazarus
Who saith — But why all this of what he
saith?

Why write of trivial matters, things of
price

Calling at every moment for remark?
I noticed, on the margin of a pool 280

Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious
case,

Which, now that I review it, needs must
seem

Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth! 285

Nor I myself discern in what is writ
Good cause for the peculiar interest,
And awe indeed, this man has touched me
with.

Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness,
Had wrought upon me first. I met him
thus: 290

I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken
hills

Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out there
came

A moon made like a face with certain
spots

Multiform, manifold, and menacing:
Then a wind rose behind me. So we
met, 295

In this old sleepy town at unaware, —
The man and I. I send thee what is
writ,

Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
To this ambiguous Syrian — he may
lose,

Or steal, or give it thee, with equal
good. 300

Jerusalem's repose shall make amends
For time this letter wastes, thy time and
mine;

Till when, once more thy pardon and fare-
well!

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou
think?

So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving
too — 305

So, through the thunder comes a human
voice

Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats
here!

Face, my hands fashioned, see it in my-
self!

Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of
mine:

But love I gave thee, with myself to
love, 310

And thou must love me who have died for
thee!"

The madman saith He said so: it is
strange.

ABT VOGLER

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING
UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS
INVENTION)

(1864)

I

Would that the structure brave, the mani-
fold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys
to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a
touch . . . as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of
demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end
and of aim, 5
Adverse, each from the other heaven-
high, hell-deep removed,—
Should rush into sight at once as he
named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleas-
ure the princess he loved! . . .

II

Would it might tarry like his, the beau-
tiful building of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed
and importuned to raise! 10
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would
dispart now and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten
their master his praise!
And one would bury his brow with a
blind plunge down to hell,
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the
roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having
based me my palace well, 15
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the
nether springs.

III

And another would mount and march,
like the excellent minion he was,—
Ay, another and yet another, one crowd
but with many a crest,—

Raising my rampired walls of gold as
transparent as glass,

Eager to do and die, yield each his
place to the rest: 20

For higher still and higher (as a runner
tips with fire,

When a great illumination surprises a
festal night,—

Outlined round and round Rome's dome
from space to spire)

Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and
the pride of my soul was in sight.

IV

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was
certain, to match man's birth 25

Nature in turn conceived, obeying an
impulse as I;

And the emulous heaven yearned down,
made effort to reach the earth,

As the earth had done her best, in my
passion, to scale the sky.

Novel splendors burst forth, grew fami-
liar and dwelt with mine:

Not a point nor peak but found and
fixed its wandering star,— 30

Meteor-moons, balls of blaze; and they
did not pale nor pine,

For earth had attained to heaven, there
was no more near nor far.

V

Nay, more! For there wanted not who
walked in the glare and glow:

Presences plain in the place; or, fresh
from the Protoplast,

Furnished for ages to come, when a kind-
lier wind should blow,— 35

Lured now to begin and live, in a house
to their liking at last;

Or else the wonderful Dead who have
passed through the body and gone,

But were back once more to breathe in
an old world worth their new:

What never had been, was now; what
was, as it shall be anon;

And what is,—shall I say, matched
both? for I was made perfect,
too. 40

VI

All through my keys that gave their
sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its
wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think,
had I painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the
process so wonder-worth;
Had I written the same, made verse,—
still, effect proceeds from cause: 45
Ye know whv the forms are fair, ye
hear how the tale is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obed-
ience to laws;
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-
list enrolled:—

VII

But here is the finger of God, a flash of
the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them
and, lo, they are! 50
And I know not if, save in this, such gift
be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not
a fourth sound, but a star.
Consider it well: each tone of our scale
in itself is naught;
It is everywhere in the world,—loud,
soft, and all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two
in my thought: 55
And there! Ye have heard and seen:
consider, and bow the head!

VIII

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music
I reared;
Gone! and the good tears start, the
praises that come too slow;
For one is assured at first,—one scarce
can say that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the
gone thing was to go. 60
Never to be again! But many more of
the kind
As good, nay, better, perchance: is this
your comfort to me?

To me, who must be saved because I cling
with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same
God: ay, what was, shall be.

IX

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the
ineffable Name? 65
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not
made with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who
art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart
that thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What
was, shall live as before:
The evil is null, is naught, is silence
implying sound; 70
What was good shall be good, with, for
evil, so much good more:
On the earth the broken arcs; in the
heaven a perfect round.

X

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed
of good shall exist,—
Not its semblance, but itself: no beauty,
nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each
survives for the melodist 75
When eternity affirms the conception of
an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic
for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose
itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover
and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall
hear it by and by. 80

XI

And what is our failure here but a tri-
umph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we
withered or agonized?

Why else was the pause prolonged but
that singing might issue thence?

Why rushed the discords in, but that
harmony should be prized?

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow
to clear, — 85

Each sufferer says his say, his scheme
of the weal and woe:

But God has a few of us whom he whis-
pers in the ear;

The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis
we musicians know.

XII

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes
her reign:

I will be patient and proud, and soberly
acquiesce. 90

Give me the keys. I feel for the common
chord again,

Sliding by semitones till I sink to the
minor, — yes,

And I blunt it into a ninth; and I stand
on alien ground,

Surveying awhile the heights I rolled
from into the deep;

Which, hark, I have dared and done, for
my resting-place is found, 95

The C Major of this life: so, now I will
try to sleep.

RABBI BEN EZRA

(1864)

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be,

The last of life, for which the first was
made.

Our times are in his hand

Who saith, "A whole I planned, 5

Youth shows but half; trust God: see all,
nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,

Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,

Which lily leave and then as best recall?"

Not that, admiring stars, 10

It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars, —
Mine be some figured flame which blends,
transcends them all!"

Nor for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark! 15
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by
a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed 20
On joy, to solely seek and find a feast.
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men:
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt
the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied 25
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod:
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take,
I must believe. 30

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand
but go!

Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain; 35
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
grudge the throe!

For thence, — a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks, —
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be, 40
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would
not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs
want play? 45

To man, propose this test:
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its
lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the past profuse 50
Of power each side, perfection every turn.
Eyes, ears, took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole:
Should not the heart beat once, "How
good to live and learn"?

Not once beat, "Praise be thine! 55
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect
too;
Perfect I call thy plan.
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete, — I trust what
thou shalt do!" 60

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for
rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold 65
Possessions of the brute, — gain most, as
we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh today
I strove, made head, gained ground, upon
the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings, 70
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now,
than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its
term: 75

Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute, — a god,
though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone 80
Once more on my adventure brave and
new:

Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to
indue.

Youth ended, I shall try 85
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is
gold.

And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know,
being old. 90

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the
gray:

A whisper from the west
Shoots — "Add this to the rest, 95
Take it and try its worth: here dies an-
other day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at
last:

"This rage was right i' the main, 100
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face, now I have proved
the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act tomorrow what he learns to-
day: 105

Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the
tool's true play.

As it was better youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth, 110
Toward making, than repose on aught
found made:

So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death
nor be afraid!

Enough, now, if the Right 115
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand
thine own,
With knowledge absolute, —
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let
thee feel alone. 120

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the past!
Was I the world arraigned,
Were they my soul disdained, 125
Right? Let age speak the truth, and give
us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I re-
ceive, —
Ten who in ears and eyes 130
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall
my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass, —
Things done, that took the eye and had
the price; 135
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value
in a trice:

But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb, 140
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet
swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed 145
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and
escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel
the pitched shaped. 150

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our
clay, —
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round: 155
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past
gone, seize Today!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God
stand sure.
What entered into thee, 160
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter
and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance, —
This Present thou, forsooth, would fain
arrest, — 165
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently
impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves 170
Around thy base, no longer pause and
press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out in graver mood, — obey the
sterner stress?

Look not thou down, but up! 175
To uses of a cup:
The festal board, lamp's flash and trum-
pet's peal,

The new wine's foaming flow,
The master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what
needst thou with earth's wheel? 180

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moulded men;
And since, not even while the whirl was
worst,
Did I, — to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife, 185
Bound dizzily, — mistake my end, to slake
thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work;
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings
past the aim!
My times be in thy hand! 190
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death com-
plete the same!

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS;

OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND
(1864)

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an
one as thyself."

['Will sprawl, now that the heat of day
is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop
his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool
slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things
course, 5
Run in and out each arm, and make him
laugh;
And while above his head a pompion-
plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and
beard,
And now a flower drops with a bee in-
side, 10

And now a fruit to snap at, catch, and
crunch:
He looks out o'er yon sea which sun-
beams cross
And recross till they weave a spider-web
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks
at times),
And talks to his own self, howe'er he
please, 15
Touching that other, whom his dam called
God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes — ha,
Could He but know! — and time to vex
is now,
When talk is safer than in winter-time.
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep 20
In confidence he drudges at their task;
And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,
Letting the rank tongue blossom into
speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o'.the
moon. 25

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to
match,
But not the stars, — the stars came other-
wise;
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such
as that;
Also this isle, what lives and grows there-
on,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the
same. 30

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:
He hated that He cannot change His
cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy
fish
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream
where she lived,
And thaw herself within the lukewarm
brine 35
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far
amid,
A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls
of wave;

Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life,
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o'
the sun), 40

Flounced back from bliss she was not born
to breathe,

And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this
isle,

Trees and the fowls here, beast and creep-
ing thing. 45

Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a
leech;

Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger
brown

He hath watched hunt with that slant
white-wedge eye

By moonlight; and the pie with the long
tongue 50

That pricks deep into oakwarts for a
worm,

And says a plain word when she finds her
prize,

But will not eat the ants: the ants them-
selves

That build a wall of seeds and settled
stalks

About their hole — He made all these
and more, 55

Made all we see, and us, in spite: how
else?

He could not, Himself, make a second
self

To be His mate, — as well have made
Himself;

He would not make what He dislikes
or slights,

An eyesore to Him, or not worth His
pains; 60

But did, in envy, listlessness, or sport,
Make what Himself would fain, in a
manner, be, —

Weaker in most points, stronger in a
few,

Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the
while,

Things he admires and mocks too — that
is it. 65

Because, so brave, so better though they
be,

It nothing skills if He begin to plague.

Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,
Add honeycomb and pods, I have per-
ceived,

Which bite like finches when they bill and
kiss; 70

Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink
up all, —

Quick, quick, — till maggots scamper
through my brain;

Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded
thyme,

And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.
Put case, unable to be what I wish, 75

I yet could make a live bird out of clay:
Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban

Able to fly? — for, there, see, he hath
wings,

And great comb like the hoopoe's to ad-
mire;

And there, a sting to do his foes of-
fence; 80

There, — and I will that he begin to live,
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs high up that make the merry din,
Saucy through their veined wings, and
mind me not.

In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle
clay, 85

And he lay stupid-like, — why, I should
laugh;

And if he, spying me, should fall to weep,
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow
again, —

Well, as the chance were, this might take
or else 90

Not take my fancy: I might hear his cry
And give the mankin three sound legs
for one;

Or pluck the other off, leave him like an
egg,

And lessoned he was mine and merely
clay.

Were this no pleasure, lying in the
thyme, 95
Drinking the mash, with brain become
alive,—
Making and marring clay at will? So
He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor
wrong in Him,
Nor kind nor cruel: He is strong and
Lord.

'Am strong myself compared to yonder
crabs 100

That march now from the mountain to
the sea;

'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-
first,—

Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.

'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple
spots

Shall join the file, one pincer twisted
off; 105

'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a
worm,

And two worms he whose nippers end
in red;

As it likes me each time I do: so He.

Well, then, 'supposeth He is good i' the
main,

Placable if His mind and ways were
guessed, 110

But rougher than His handiwork, be
sure!

Oh, He hath made things worthier than
Himself,

And envieth that, so helped, such things
do more

Than He who made them! What con-
soles but this,

That they, unless through Him, do
naught at all, 115

And must submit? what other use in
things?

'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint
That, blown through, gives exact the
scream o' the jay

When from her wing you twitch the
feathers blue:

Sound this, and little birds that hate the
jay 120

Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe
is hurt.

Put case, such pipe could prattle and
boast, forsooth:

"I catch the birds, I am the crafty
thing,

I make the cry my maker cannot make
With his great round mouth; he must
blow through mine!" 125

Would not I smash it with my foot? So
He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at
ease?

Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,
What knows,—the something over Sete-
bos

That made Him; or He, may be, found
and fought, 130

Worsted, drove off, and did to nothing,
perchance.

There may be something quiet o'er His
head,

Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor
grief,

Since both derive from weakness in some
way.

I joy because the quails come; would not
joy 135

Could I bring quails here when I have a
mind:

This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.

'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its
couch;

But never spends much thought nor care
that way.

It may look up, work up,—the worse for
those 140

It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos

The many-handed as a cuttle-fish;

Who, making Himself feared through
what He does,

Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot
soar

To what is quiet and hath happy life; 145
Next looks down here, and out of every
spite

Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon
real,
These good things to match those as hips
do grapes.

'Tis solace making baubles,— ay, and
sport.

Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his
books 150

Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle.
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves,
arrow-shaped,

Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious
words;

Has peeled a wand and called it by a
name;

Weareth at whiles, for an enchanter's
robe, 155

The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;
And hath an ounce sleeker than young-
ling mole,

A four-legged serpent he makes cower
and couch,

Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind
his eye,—

And saith she is Miranda and my wife. 160
'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane
He bids go wade for fish and straight
disgorge;

Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,
Blinded the eyes of and brought somewhat
tame,

And split its toe-webs, and now pens the
drudge 165

In a hole o' the rock, and calls him Cali-
ban,—

A bitter heart that bides its time and
bites.

'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,
Taket'h his mirth with make-believes: so
He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all
things, 170

Which Setebos vexed only: 'holds not so.
Who made them weak, meant weakness
He might vex.

Had He meant other,— while His hand
was in

Why not make horny eyes no thorn could
prick,

Or plate my scalp with bone against the
snow, 175

Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and
joint

Like an orc's armor? Ay,— so spoil His
sport!

He is the One now: only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what
profits him.

Ay, himself loves what does him good;
but why? 180

'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded
beast

Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose;
But, had he eyes, would want no help, but
hate

Or love just as it liked him: He hath eyes
Also it pleases Setebos to work, 185

Use all His hands, and exercise much
craft,—

By no means for the love of what is
worked.

'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the
world

When all goes right, in this safe summer-
time,

And he wants little,— hungers, aches, not
much,— 190

Than trying what to do with wit and
strength.

'Falls to make something: 'piled yon pile
of turfs;

And squared and stuck there squares of
soft white chalk,

And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon
on each;

And set up endwise certain spikes of
tree; 195

And crowned the whole with a sloth's
skull a-top,

Found dead i' the woods, too hard for
one to kill.

No use at all i' the work—for work's
sole sake;

'Shall some day knock it down again: so
He.

'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats in
proof! 200

One hurricane will spoil six good months'
hope.

He hath a spite against me, that I know;
Just as He favors Prosper, who knows
why?

So it is, all the same, as well I find.

'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced
them firm 205

With stone and stake to stop she-
tortoises

Crawling to lay their eggs here: well, one
wave,

Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its
large tongue,

And licked the whole labor flat: so much
for spite. 210

'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it
lies)

Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the
shade:

Often they scatter sparkles: there is
force!

'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a
stone. 215

Please Him and hinder this? — What
Prosper does?

Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He!
There is the sport: discover how or
die!

All need not die, for of the things o' the
isle

Some flee afar, some dive, some run up
trees. 220

Those at His mercy, — why, they please
Him most

When . . . when . . . well, never try the
same way twice!

Repeat what act has pleased, He may
grow wroth:

You must not know His ways, and play
Him off,

Sure of the issue. Doth the like him-
self: 225

'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears

But steals the nut from underneath my
thumb,

And, when I threat, bites stoutly in de-
fence;

'Spareth an urchin that, contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death 230
For fright at my approach: the two ways
please.

But what would move my choler more
than this,

That either creature counted on its life
Tomorrow and next day and all days to
come, —

Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its
heart, 235

"Because he did so yesterday with me,
And otherwise with such another brute,
So must he do henceforth and always." —
Ay?

'Would teach the reasoning couple what
"must" means!

'Doth as he likes, — or wherefore Lord?'
So He. 240

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps his strength:
no change, —

If He have done His best, make no new
world

To please Him more, so leave off watch-
ing this, — 245

If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day; or, suppose, grow into
it

As grubs grow butterflies: else, here we
are,

And there is He, and nowhere help at
all.

'Believeth, with the life the pain shall
stop. 250

His dam held different, — that after death
He both plagued enemies and feasted
friends:

Idly! He doth His worst in this our
life,

Giving just respite lest we die through
pain,

Saving last pain for worst, — with which,
an end. 255

Meanwhile, the best way to escape His
ire

Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, him-
self,

Yonder two flies, with purple films and
pink,

Bask on the pompion-bell abòve: kills
both.

'Sees two black painful beetles roll their
ball 260

On head and tail, as if to save their lives:
'Moves them the stick away they strive
to clear.

Even so, 'would have him misconceive,
suppose

This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,
And always, above all else, envies Him. 265

Wherefore, he mainly dances on dark
nights,

Moans in the sun, gets under holes to
laugh,

And never speaks his mind save housed
as now:

Outside, 'groans, 'curses. If He caught
me here,

O'erheard this speech, and asked, "What
chucklest at?" 270

'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger
off,

Or of my three kid yearlings burn the
best,

Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,
Or push my tame beast for the orc to
taste, —

While myself lit a fire, and made a
song 275

And sung it: "*What I hate, be consecrate,
To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate
For Thee; what see for envy in poor
me?*"

Hoping the while, — since evils sometimes
mend,

Warts rub away and sores are cured with
slime, — 280

That, some strange day, will either the
Quiet catch

And conquer Setebos, or likelier He,
Decrepit, may doze, doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the world
at once!

Crickets stop hissing; not a bird — or,
yes, 285

There scuds His raven that has told Him
all!

It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha!
The wind

Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house
o' the move,

And fast invading fires begin! White
blaze —

A tree's head snaps — and there, there,
there, there, there, 290

His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at
Him!

Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!

'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper
lip,

Will let those quails fly, will not eat this
month

One little mess of whelks, so he may
'scape!] 295

CONFESSIONS

(1864)

What is he buzzing in my ears?

"Now that I come to die
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, — what I view
again 5

Where the physic bottles stand
On the table's edge, — is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry 10
O'er the garden-wall — is the curtain
blue,

Or green, to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June
weather

Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle, labelled
"Ether," 15
Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace, somewhere near the stopper,
There watched for me, one June,
A girl — I know, sir, it's improper,
My poor mind's out of tune — 20

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except —
They styled their house "The Lodge":

What right had a lounge up their lane? 25
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help, — their eyes
might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together:
As she left the attic, — there, 30
By the rim of the bottle labelled
"Ether", —
And stole from stair to stair,

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate.
Alas,
We loved, sir, — used to meet:
How sad and bad and mad it was — 35
But, then, how it was sweet!

PROSPICE

(1861)

Fear death? — to feel the fog in my
throat,
The mist in my face;
When the snows begin, and the blasts
denote
I am nearing the place, —
The power of the night, the press of the
storm, 5
The post of the foe;

Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a
visible form:

Yet the strong man must go.
For the journey is done and the summit
attained,
And the barriers fall; 10
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon
be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes,
and forbore, 15
And bade me creep past.

No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like
my peers
The heroes of old, —
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's
arrears

Of pain, darkness, and cold. 20
For sudden the worst turns the best, to the
brave:

The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices
that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out
of pain, 25

Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp
thee again;
And with God be the rest!

Songs from JAMES LEE'S WIFE

(1864)

(SECTION I)

Ah, Love, but a day
And the world has changed!
The sun's away,
And the bird estranged;
The wind has dropped, 5
And the sky's deranged:
Summer has stopped.

Look in my eyes!
Wilt thou change too?
Should I fear surprise? 10
Shall I find aught new

In the old and dear,
In the good and true,
With the changing year?

Thou art a man, 15
But I am thy love.
For the lake, its swan;
For the dell, its dove:
And for thee — (oh, hasten!) —
Me, to bend above, 20
Me, to hold embraced.

(SECTION VII)

Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown old
earth,

This autumn morning! How he sets
his bones
To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out knees
and feet

For the ripple to run over in its mirth;
Listening the while, where on the heap
of stones 5

The white breast of the sea-lark twitters
sweet.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true;
Such is life's trial, as old earth smiles
and knows. —

If you loved only what were worth your
love,

Love were clear gain, and wholly well for
you: 10

Make the low nature better by your
throes!

Give earth yourself, go up for gain
above!

EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS

A PICTURE BY LEIGHTON

(1864)

But give them me, — the mouth, the eyes,
the brow!

Let them once more absorb me! One look
now

Will lap me round forever, not to pass
Out of its light, though darkness lie be-
yond:

Hold me but safe again within the bond 5
Of one immortal look! All woe that
was,
Forgotten; and all terror that may be,
Defied — no past is mine, no future: look
at me!

O LYRIC LOVE

(From *The Ring and the Book*, 1868: con-
clusion of Book First)

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire, —
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his
face; 1395

Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart, —
When the first summons from the darkling
earth

Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched
their blue,

And bared them of the glory, — to drop
down,

To toil for man, to suffer, or to die: 1400
This is the same voice, can thy soul know
change?

Hail, then, and hearken from the realms of
help!

Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of
thee,

Except with bent head and beseeching
hand, 1405

That still, despite the distance and the
dark,

What was, again may be, — some inter-
change

Of grace, some splendor once thy very
thought,

Some benediction anciently thy smile;
— Never conclude but raising hand and
head 1410

Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet
yearn

For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on; so blessing back

In those thy realms of help, that heaven
thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face
makes proud, 1415
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot
may fall!

SUCH A STARVED BANK OF MOSS

(*Prologue of The Two Poets of Croisic*)

(1878)

Such a starved bank of moss
Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
Violets were born!

Sky, — what a scowl of cloud 5
Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
Splendid, a star!

World, — how it walled about
Life with disgrace, 10
Till God's own smile came out:
That was thy face!

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE

(1883)

Never the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path, — how soft to pace!
This May, — what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face? 5

In a dream that loved one's face meets
mine:
But the house is narrow; the place is
bleak
Where, outside, rain and wind combine
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
With a hostile eye at my flushing
cheek, 10
With a malice that marks each word, each
sign!

O enemy sly and serpentine,
'Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past
Thus firm and fast, 15
Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
This path so soft to pace shall lead
Through the magic of May to herself in-
deed!
Or narrow if needs the house must
be,
Outside are the storms and strangers:
we — 20
Oh, close, safe, warm, sleep I and she, —
I and she.

WANTING IS — WHAT?

(1883)

Wanting is — what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant, —
Where is the blot?
Beamy the world, yet a blank all the
same, — 5
Framework which waits for a picture to
frame!
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering, with naught they em-
bower!
Come, then, complete incomplection, O
comer:
Pant through the blueness, perfect the
summer! 10
Breathe but one breath,
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love! 15

SPECULATIVE

(1889)

Others may need new life in Heaven, —
Man, Nature, Art, made new, assume!
Man, with new mind old sense to
leaven;
Nature, — new light to clear old gloom;

Art that breaks bounds, gets soaring-
room. 5

I shall pray: "Fugitive as precious,
Minutes which passed, — return, re-
main!

Let earth's old life once more enmesh us,
You with old pleasure, me, — old pain:
So we but meet nor part again!" 10

SUMMUM BONUM

(1889)

All the breath and the bloom of the year in
the bag of one bee;

All the wonder and wealth of the mine
in the heart of one gem;

In the core of one pearl, all the shade and
the shine of the sea!

Breath and bloom, shade and shine, —
wonder, wealth, — and, how far above
them,

Truth, that's brighter than gem, 5

Trust, that's purer than pearl —

Brightest truth, purest trust in the uni-
verse — all were for me

In the kiss of one girl.

WHY I AM A LIBERAL

(1885)

"Why?" — Because all I haply can and
do,

All that I am now, all I hope to be, —
Whence comes it save from fortune setting
free

Body and soul, the purpose to pursue
God traced for both? If fetters not a
few, 5

Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,
These shall I bid men, — each in his de-
gree

Also God-guided, — bear, and gayly, too?

But little do or can the best of us:
That little is achieved through Liberty. 10

Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus,
His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss
A brother's right to freedom. — That is
"Why."

EPILOGUE

(From *Asolando*, 1889)

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-
time,

When you set your fancies free,

Will they pass to where, — by death, fools
think, imprisoned, —

Low he lies who once so loved you, whom
you loved so —

Pity me? 5

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mis-
taken!

What had I, on earth, to do

With the slothful, with the mawkish, the
unmanly?

Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I
drivel, —

Being — who? 10

One who never turned his back, but
marched breast forward;

Never doubted clouds would break;

Never dreamed, though right were
worsted, wrong would triumph:

Held, we fall to rise, are baffled to fight
better,

Sleep to wake. 15

No: at noonday, in the bustle of man's
work-time,

Greet the unseen with a cheer!

Bid him forward, breast and back as
either should be:

"Strive and thrive!" cry, "Speed! fight
on, fare ever, —

There, as here!" 20

ELIZABETH BARRETT
BROWNING

(1806-1861)

SONNETS FROM THE PORTU-
GUESE

(1845-46)

I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-
for years,

Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue, 5
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy
years,

Those of my own life, who by turns had
flung

A shadow across me. Straightway I was
'ware,

So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the
hair; 11

And a voice said in mastery, while I
strove:

"Guess now who holds thee?" — "Death,"
I said. But there,

The holy answer rang: "Not Death, but
Love."

VI

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Never-
more

Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand 5
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I for-
bore, —

Thy touch upon the palm. The widest
land

Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in
mine

With pulses that beat double. What I
do, 10

And what I dream, include thee, as the
wine

Must taste of its own grapes. And when
I sue

God for myself, He hears that name of
thine,

And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

VII

The face of all the world is changed, I
think,

Since first I heard the footsteps of thy
soul

Move still, oh, still, beside me; as they
stole

Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death; where I, who thought

to sink, 5

Was caught up into love, and taught the
whole

Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,

And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee
anear.

The names of country, heaven, are
changed away 10

For where thou art or shalt be, there or
here;

And this . . . this lute and song, loved
yesterday,

(The singing angels know), are only dear
Because thy name moves right in what
they say.

XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say,

"I love her for her smile, — her look, —
her way

Of speaking gently, — for a trick of
thought

That falls in well with mine, and certes
brought 5

A sense of pleasant ease on such a day":

For these things in themselves, Belovèd,
may

Be changed, or change for thee, — and love
so wrought

May be unwrought so. Neither love me
for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks
dry: 10
A creature might forget to weep who bore
Thy comfort long,—and lose thy love
thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eter-
nity.

XXII

When our two souls stand up erect and
strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and
nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point,—what bitter
wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not
long 5
Be here contented? Think! in mounting
higher,
The angels would press on us, and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Belovèd,—where the
unfit 10
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour round-
ing it.

XXIX

I think of thee!—my thoughts do twine
and bud
About thee, as wild vines about a tree
Put out broad leaves, and soon there's
nought to see
Except the straggling green which hides the
wood.
Yet, O my palm-tree! be it understood 5
I will not have my thoughts instead of
thee
Who art dearer, better. Rather, in-
stantly
Renew thy presence: as a strong tree
should,

Rustle thy boughs and set thy trunk all
bare,
And let these bands of greenery which
ensphere thee 10
Drop heavily down,—burst, shattered,
everywhere!
Because, in this deep joy to see and hear
thee,
And breathe within thy shadow a new air,
I do not think of thee—I am too near
thee.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the
ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and
height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of
sight
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's 5
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for
right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from
praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs; and with my childhood's
faith. 10
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. I love thee with the
breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God
choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

SYDNEY DOBELL
(1824-1874)

AMERICA
(1855)

Men say, Columbia, we shall hear thy
guns.
But in what tongue shall be thy battle-
cry?

Not that our sires did love in years gone
by,
When all the Pilgrim Fathers were little
sons
In merry homes of England? Back, and
see 5
Thy satchelled ancestor! Behold, he
runs
To mine; and, clasped, they tread the equal
lea
To the same village-school, where side by
side
They spell "Our Father." Hard by, — the
twin-pride
Of that gray hall whose ancient oriel
gleams 10
Through yon baronial pines, — with looks
of light
Our sister-mothers sit beneath one
tree.
Meanwhile our Shakespeare wanders past
and dreams
His Helena and Hermia. — Shall we
fight?

II

Nor force nor fraud shall sunder us! O
ye 15
Who north or south, on east or western
land,
Native to noble sounds, say truth for
truth,
Freedom for freedom, love for love, and
God
For God; O ye who in eternal youth
Speak with a living and creative flood 20
This universal English, and do stand
Its breathing book: live worthy of that
grand,
Heroic utterance, — parted, yet a whole,
Far, yet unsevered, — children brave and
free
Of the great Mother-tongue; and ye shall
be 25
Lords of an empire wide as Shakespeare's
soul,
Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as
Spenser's dream.

COVENTRY PATMORE

(1823-1896)

THE MARRIED LOVER

(From *The Angel in the House*, 1860:
Book Second, Canto XII)

Why, having won her, do I woo? —
Because her spirit's vestal grace
Provokes me always to pursue,
But, spirit-like, eludes embrace;
Because her womanhood is such 5
That, as on court-days subjects kiss
The Queen's hand, yet so near a touch
Affirms no mean familiarness, —
Nay, rather marks more fair the height
Which can with safety so neglect 10
To dread, as lower ladies might,
That grace could meet with disrespect:
Thus she with happy favor feeds
Allegiance from a love so high
That thence no false conceit proceeds 15
Of difference bridged, or state put by. —
Because, although in act and word
As lowly as a wife can be,
Her manners, when they call me lord,
Remind me 'tis by courtesy; 20
Not with her least consent of will,
Which would my proud affection hurt,
But by the noble style that still
Imputes an unattained desert. —
Because her gay and lofty brows, 25
When all is won which hope can ask,
Reflect a light of hopeless snows
That bright in virgin ether bask;
Because, though free of the outer court
I am, this Temple keeps its shrine 30
Sacred to Heaven: because, in short,
She's not, and never can be, mine.

THE TOYS

(From *The Unknown Eros*, 1877)

My little Son, who looked from thoughtful
eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up
wise,

Having my law and the seventh time dis-
 obeyed,
 I struck him, and dismissed
 With hard words and unknissed, — 5
 His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
 Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder
 sleep,
 I visited his bed,
 But found him slumbering deep, ~
 With darkened eyelids, and their lashes
 yet 10
 From his late sobbing wet.
 And I, with moan,
 Kissing away his tears, left others of my
 own.
 For, on a table drawn beside his head,
 He had put, within his reach, 15
 A box of counters, and a red-veined stone,
 A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
 And six or seven shells,
 A bottle with bluebells,
 And two French copper coins, — ranged
 there with careful art, 20
 To comfort his sad heart.

So when that night I prayed
 To God, I wept, and said:
 "Ah, when at last we lie with tranced
 breath,
 Not vexing Thee in death, 25
 And Thou rememberest of what toys
 We made our joys,
 How weakly understood
 Thy great commanded good, —
 Then, fatherly not less 30
 Than I whom Thou hast moulded from
 the clay,
 Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
 'I will be sorry for their childishness.' "

C. TENNYSON-TURNER

(1808-1879)

LETTY'S GLOBE

When Letty had scarce passed her third
 glad year,
 And her young, artless words began to
 flow,

One day we gave the child a colored
 sphere
 Of the wide earth, that she might mark
 and know,
 By tint and outline, all its sea and land. 5
 She patted all the world: old empires
 peeped
 Between her baby fingers; her soft hand
 Was welcome at all frontiers. How she
 leaped
 And laughed and prattled in her world-
 wide bliss!
 But when we turned her sweet unlearnèd
 eye 10
 On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry,
 "Oh! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there!"
 And, while she hid all England with a
 kiss,
 Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

W. M. THACKERAY

(1811-1863)

AT THE CHURCH GATE

(From *Pendennis*, 1848-50: Chapter
 XXXI)

Although I enter not,
 Yet round about the spot
 Ofttimes I hover;
 And near the sacred gate,
 With longing eyes I wait, 5
 Expectant of her.

The Minster bell tolls out,
 Above the city's rout
 And noise and humming. —
 They've hushed the Minster bell: 10
 The organ 'gins to swell:
 She's coming, she's coming!

My lady comes at last,
 Timid, and stepping fast,
 And hastening hither, 15

With modest eyes downcast:
 She comes — she's here — she's past —
 May Heaven go with her!

Kneel undisturbed, fair Saint!
 Pour out your praise or plaint 20
 Meekly and duly:
 I will not enter there,
 To sully your pure prayer
 With thoughts unruly.

But suffer me to pace 25
 Round the forbidden place,
 Lingering a minute, —
 Like outcast spirits who wait
 And see, through heaven's gate,
 Angels within it. 30

SIR F. H. DOYLE
 (1810-1888)

THE EPICUREAN

Upon an everlasting tide
 Into the silent seas we go;
 But verdure laughs along the side,
 And on the margin roses blow.

Nor life, nor death, nor aught they hold, 5
 Rate thou above their natural height:
 Yet learn that all our eyes behold
 Has value, if we mete it right.

Pluck, then, the flowers that line the
 stream,
 Instead of fighting with its power: 10
 But pluck as flowers, not gems, nor deem
 That they will bloom beyond their hour.

Whate'er betides, from day to day
 An even pulse and spirit keep;
 And like a child worn out with play, 15
 When wearied with existence, sleep.

EDWARD FITZGERALD
 (1809-1883)

RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM
 (1859, 1868, 1872, 1879)

I

Wake! For the Sun, who scattered into
 flight
 The Stars before him from the field of
 Night,
 Drives Night along with them from
 heaven, and strikes
 The Sultán's turret with a shaft of light.

II

Before the phantom of False Morning
 died, 5
 Methought a Voice within the Tavern
 cried:
 "When all the temple is prepared within,
 Why nods the drowsy worshipper out-
 side?"

III

And, as the cock crew, those who stood
 before
 The Tavern shouted: "Open, then, the
 door! 10
 You know how little while we have to
 stay,
 And, once departed, may return no more."

IV

Now the New Year reviving old desires,
 The thoughtful soul to solitude retires, —
 Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on
 the bough 15
 Puts out, and Jesus from the ground sus-
 pires.

V

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
 And Jamshyd's Seven-ringed Cup where
 no one knows:
 But still a ruby kindles in the vine,
 And many a garden by the water blows. 20

VI

And David's lips are lockt; but in divine
High-piping Pehlevi,—with "Wine! Wine!
Wine!

Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to
the Rose

That sallow cheek of hers to incarnadine.

VII

Come, fill the cup, and in the fire of
spring 25

Your winter-garment of repentance fling:

The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the wing.

VIII

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter
run, 30

The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by
drop,

The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX

Each morn a thousand roses brings, you
say:

Yes, but where leaves the rose of yester-
day?

And this first summer month that brings
the rose 35

Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

X

Well, let it take them! What have we
to do

With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?

Let Zál and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hátim call to supper—heed not you. 40

XI

With me along the strip of herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,

Where name of Slave and Sultán is for-
got—

And peace to Máhmúd on his golden
throne!

XII

A book of verses underneath the bough, 45
A jug of wine, a loaf of bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the wilderness—
Oh, wilderness were Paradise enow!

XIII

Some for the glories of this world; and
some

Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come; 50

Ah, take the cash, and let the credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum!

XIV

Look to the blowing Rose about us—"Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the world I
blow,—

At once the silken tassel of my purse 55
Tear, and its treasure on the garden
throw."

XV

And those who husbanded the golden
grain,

And those who flung it to the winds like
rain,

Alike to no such aureate earth are
turned

As, buried once, men want dug up again. 60

XVI

The worldly hope men set their hearts
upon

Turns ashes—or it prospers; and anon,

Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,
Lighting a little hour or two—was gone.

XVII

Think, in this battered Caravanserai 65
Whose portals are alternate Night and

Day,

How Sultán after Sultán with his pomp
Abode his destined hour, and went his way.

XVIII

They say the lion and the lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and
drank deep: 70

And Bahrá'm, that great Hunter — the
wild ass
Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his
sleep.

XIX

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The rose as where some buried Cæsar
bled;

That every hyacinth the garden wears 75
Dropt in her lap from some once lovely
head.

XX

And this reviving herb whose tender green
Fledges the river-lip on which we lean —

Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely lip it springs un-
seen! 80

XXI

Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that clears
TODAY of past regrets and future fears:

Tomorrow! — Why, tomorrow I may
be
Myself with yesterday's Sev'n Thousand
Years.

XXII

For some we loved, the loveliest and the
best 85

That from his vintage rolling Time hath
prest,

Have drunk their Cup a round or two
before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII

And we that now make merry in the room
They left, and Summer dresses in new
bloom, — 90

Ourselves, must we beneath the couch of
earth

Descend — ourselves to make a couch —
for whom?

XXIV

Ah, make the most of what we yet may
spend,

Before we too into the dust descend:

Dust into dust, and under dust to lie, 95
Sans wine, sans song, sans singer, and —
sans end!

XXV

Alike for those who for TODAY prepare,
And those that after some TOMORROW
stare,

A Muezzín from the Tower of Dark-
ness cries,

"Fools! your reward is neither here nor
there." 100

XXVI

Why, all the Saints and Sages who dis-
cussed

Of the Two Worlds so wisely — they are
thrust

Like foolish prophets forth: their words
to scorn

Are scattered, and their mouths are stopt
with dust.

XXVII

Myself when young did eagerly frequent 105
Doctor and saint, and heard great argu-
ment

About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I
went.

XXVIII

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make
it grow; 110

And this was all the harvest that I
reaped:

"I came like water, and like wind I go."

XXIX

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
Nor *Whence*, like water willy-nilly flow-
ing;

And out of it, as wind along the waste, 115
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX

What, without asking, hither hurried
Whence?

And, without asking, *Whither* hurried
hence?

Oh, many a cup of this forbidden wine
Must drown the memory of that in-
solence! 120

XXXI

Up from Earth's centre through the
Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the throne of Saturn sate,
And many a knot unravelled by the
road,—
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

XXXII

There was the door to which I found no
key; 125
There was the veil through which I might
not see:
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was—and then no more of THEE
and ME.

XXXIII

Earth could not answer; nor the seas that
mourn
In flowing purple, of their Lord forlorn; 130
Nor rolling Heaven,—with all his
Signs revealed
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and
Morn.

XXXIV

Then of the THEE IN ME who works be-
hind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A lamp amid the Darkness; and I
heard, 135
As from Without: "THE ME WITHIN
THEE BLIND!"

XXXV

Then to the lip of this poor earthen urn
I leaned, the Secret of my Life to learn:
And lip to lip it murmured: "While you
live,
Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall
return." 140

XXXVI

I think the vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answered, once did live,

And drink; and ah! the passive lip I
kissed,
How many kisses might it take—and
give!

XXXVII

For I remember stopping by the way 145
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all-obiterated tongue
It murmured: "Gently, Brother, gently,
pray!"

XXXVIII

And has not such a story from of old
Down Man's successive generations rolled
Of such a clod of saturated earth 151
Cast by the Maker into human mould?

XXXIX

And not a drop that from our cups we
throw
For Earth to drink of, but may steal
below
To quench the fire of anguish in some
eye 155
There hidden—far beneath, and long ago.

XL

As then the Tulip, for her morning sup
Of heav'nly vintage, from the soil looks up,
Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you,—like an empty
Cup. 160

XLI

Perplex no more with Human or Divine,
Tomorrow's tangle to the winds resign,
And lose your fingers in the tresses of
The cypress-slender minister of wine.

XLII

And if the wine you drink, the lip you
press, 165
End in what All begins and ends in—
Yes:
Think then you are *Today* what *Yes-*
terday
You were—*Tomorrow* you shall not be
less.

XLIII

So when the Angel of the Darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-
brink, 170

And, offering his cup, invite your soul
Forth to your lips to quaff, — you shall not
shrink.

XLIV

Why, if the Soul can fling the dust aside,
And naked on the air of Heaven ride,

Were't not a shame, — were't not a
shame for him 175
In this clay carcase crippled to abide?

XLV

'Tis but a tent where takes his one day's
rest

A sultán to the realm of Death address:
The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes and prepares it for another
Guest. 180

XLVI

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no
more:

The Eternal Sáki from that bowl has
poured
Millions of bubbles like us, and will pour.

XLVII

When You and I behind the Veil are
past, 185

Oh, but the long, long while the World
shall last, —

Which of our coming and departure
heeds

As the Sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.

XLVIII

A moment's halt, — a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the
Waste, — 190

And lo! the phantom Caravan has
reached

The NOTHING it set out from . . . Oh,
make haste!

XLIX

Would you that spangle of Existence spend
About THE SECRET, — quick about it,
Friend!

A hair perhaps divides the False and
True — 195

And upon what, prithee, does life depend?

L

A hair perhaps divides the False and True:
Yes; and a single Alif were the clue, —

Could you but find it, — to the Treas-
ure-house,

And peradventure to THE MASTER
too; 200

LI

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's
veins

Running, quicksilver-like eludes your
pains;

Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi;
and

They change and perish all, — but He
remains;

LII

A moment guessed — then back behind the
fold 205

Immerst of darkness round the Drama
rolled

Which, for the pastime of Eternity,
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.

LIII

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor
Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening
door, 216

You gaze *Today*, while You are You—
how then

Tomorrow, when You shall be You no
more?

LIV

Waste not your hour; nor, in the vain
pursuit

Of This and That, endeavor and dispute:
Better be jocund with the fruitful
grape 215

Than sadden after none, or bitter, fruit.

LV

You know, my Friends, with what a brave
carouse
I made a second marriage in my house,—
Divorced old barren Reason from my
bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to
spouse. 220

LVI

For "Is" and "Is-NOT" though with rule
and line,
And "UP-AND-DOWN" by Logic, I define,
Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

LVII

Ah, but my Computations, people say, 225
Reduced the Year to better reckoning?—
Nay,
'Twas only striking from the Calendar
Unborn Tomorrow, and dead Yesterday.

LVIII

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the dusk an Angel
Shape 230
Bearing a vessel on his shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the
Grape!

LIX

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The two-and-seventy jarring sects con-
fute,—
The sovereign Alchemist that in a
trice 235
Life's leaden metal into gold transmute;

LX

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing
Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the
Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind
sword. 240

LXI

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who
dare
BlaspHEME the twisted tendril as a
snare?
A blessing,—we should use it, should
we not?
And if a curse,—why, then, Who set it
there?

LXII

I must abjure the balm of life! I must, 245
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on
trust,
Or lured with hope of some diviner
drink
To fill the Cup—when crumbled into
dust!

LXIII

Oh, threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain,—*This* Life
flies; 250
One thing is certain and the rest is lies;
The flower that once has blown for ever
dies.

LXIV

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of Darkness
through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road, 255
Which to discover we must travel too.

LXV

The revelations of Devout and Learned
Who rose before us, and as prophets
burned,
Are all but stories which, awoke from
sleep,
They told their comrades, and to sleep
returned. 260

LXVI

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul returned to me,
And answered, "I myself am Heav'n and
Hell"—

LXVII

Heav'n but the vision of fulfilled desire, 265
 And Hell the shadow from a soul on fire,
 Cast on the Darkness into which Our-
 selves,
 So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

LXVIII

We are no other than a moving row
 Of magic shadow-shapes that come and
 go 270
 Round with this Sun-illumined Lantern
 held
 In midnight by the Master of the Show;

LXIX

But helpless Pieces of the game He plays
 Upon this chequer-board of nights and
 days, —
 Hither and thither moves, and checks,
 and slays, 275
 And one by one back in the closet lays.

LXX

The ball no question makes of Ayes and
 Noes,
 But here or there, as strikes the player,
 goes;
 And He that tossed you down into the
 field,
He knows about it all — *HE* knows — *HE*
 knows! 280

LXXI

The Moving Finger writes; and, having
 writ,
 Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a line;
 Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

LXXII

And that inverted bowl they call the
 Sky, 285
 Whereunder crawling cooped we live and
 die,
 Lift not your hands to *It* for help —
 for *It*
 As impotently moves as you or I.

LXXIII

With Earth's first clay they did the last
 man knead,
 And there of the last harvest sowed the
 seed; 290
 And the first morning of Creation wrote
 What the last dawn of reckoning shall
 read.

LXXIV

YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did pre-
 pare, —
TOMORROW's silence, triumph, or despair:
 Drink! for you know not whence you
 came, nor why; 295
 Drink! for you know not why you go, nor
 where.

LXXV

I tell you this: — When, started from the
 goal,
 Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
 Of Heav'n, Parwin and Mushtarí they
 flung, —
 In my predestined plot of Dust and
 Soul 300

LXXVI

The Vine had struck a fibre; which about
 If clings my Being, — let the Dervish flout:
 Of my base metal may be filed a key
 That shall unlock the Door he howls with-
 out.

LXXVII

And this I know: whether the one True
 Light 305
 Kindle to Love, or wrath-consume me
 quite, —
 One flash of It within the Tavern
 caught
 Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LXXVIII

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
 A conscious Something to resent the
 yoke 310
 Of unpermitted pleasure, — under pain
 Of everlasting penalties, if broke!

LXXIX

What! from his helpless creature be repaid
Pure gold for what he lent him dross-
allayed, —

Sue for a debt we never did contract, 315
And cannot answer — Oh, the sorry trade!

LXXX

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with
gin

Beset the road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with predestined evil
round

Enmesh, and then impute my fall to
sin! 320

LXXXI

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst
make,

And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the sin wherewith the face of
Man

Is blackened, — Man's forgiveness give, —
and take!

LXXXII

As under cover of departing day 325
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,

Once more within the Potter's house
alone

I stood, surrounded by the shapes of clay:

LXXXIII

Shapes of all sorts and sizes, great and
small,

That stood along the floor and by the
wall; 330

And some loquacious vessels were; and
some

Listened perhaps, but never talked at all.

LXXXIV

Said one among them: "Surely not in vain
My substance of the common earth was
ta'en

And to this figure moulded, — to be
broke, 335

Or trampled back to shapeless earth
again."

LXXXV

Then said a second: "Ne'er a peevish boy
Would break the bowl from which he
drank in joy;

And He that with his hand the vessel
made

Will surely not in after wrath destroy." 340

LXXXVI

After a momentary silence spake
Some vessel of a more ungainly make:

"They sneer at me for leaning all
awry —

What! did the hand, then, of the Potter
shake?"

LXXXVII

Whereat some one of the loquacious
lot — 345

I think a Súfi pipkin — waxing hot:

"All this of Pot and Potter — Tell me,
then,

Who is the Potter, pray, and who the
Pot?"

LXXXVIII

"Why," said another, "some there are who
tell

Of one who threatens he will toss to
Hell 350

The luckless Pots he marred in making
— Pish!

He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be
well."

LXXXIX

"Well," murmured one, "let whoso make
or buy,

My clay with long oblivion is gone dry:

But fill me with the old familiar Juice, 355
Methinks I might recover by and by."

XC

So while the vessels one by one were
speaking,

The little Moon looked in that all were
seeking;

And then they jogged each other:
 "Brother! Brother!
 Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot
 a-creaking!" 360

XCI

Ah, with the Grape my fading life provide;
 And wash the body whence the life has
 died,
 And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
 By some not unfrequented garden-side —

XCII

That ev'n my buried ashes such a snare 365
 Of vintage shall fling up into the air
 As not a True-believer passing by
 But shall be overtaken unaware.

XCIII

Indeed, the Idols I have loved so long
 Have done my credit in men's eyes much
 wrong: 370
 Have drowned my glory in a shallow
 cup,
 And sold my reputation for a song.

XCIV

Indeed, indeed, repentance oft before
 I swore — but was I sober when I swore?
 And then, and then came Spring, and
 rose-in-hand 375
 My threadbare penitence apieces tore.

XCV

And much as Wine has played the Infidel,
 And robbed me of my robe of Honor —
 Well,
 I wonder often what the vintners buy
 One half so precious as the stuff they
 sell. 380

XCVI

Yet ah, that Spring should vanish with the
 rose!
 That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript
 should close!

The nightingale that in the branches
 sang, —
 Ah whence, and whither flown again, who
 knows!

XCVII

Would but the Desert of the Fountain
 yield 385
 One glimpse — if dimly, yet indeed, re-
 vealed —
 To which the fainting Traveller might
 spring,
 As springs the trampled herbage of the
 field.

XCVIII

Would but some wingèd angel, ere too
 late,
 Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate, 390
 And make the stern Recorder otherwise
 Enregister, or quite obliterate!

XCIX

Ah Love! could you and I with Him con-
 spire
 To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things
 entire,
 Would not we shatter it to bits — and
 then 395
 Remould it nearer to the Heart's desire!

C

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again —
 How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
 How oft hereafter rising look for us
 Through this same garden, — and for *one*
 in vain! 400

CI

And when like her, oh Sákí, you shall pass
 Among the guests star-scattered on the
 grass,
 And in your joyous errand reach the
 spot
 Where I made one — turn down an empty
 glass!

TAMAM

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

(1819-1861)

IN A LECTURE-ROOM

(1840)

Away, haunt thou not me,
 Thou vain Philosophy!
 Little hast thou bestead,
 Save to perplex the head,
 And leave the spirit dead. 5
 Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,
 While from the secret treasure-depths below,
 Fed by the skiey shower,
 And clouds that sink and rest on hilltops high,
 Wisdom at once, and Power, 10
 Are welling, bubbling forth, unseen, incessantly?
 Why labor at the dull mechanic oar,
 When the fresh breeze is blowing,
 And the strong current flowing,
 Right onward to the Eternal Shore? 15

HOW OFTEN SIT I

(*From* "Blank Misgivings of a Creature moving about in Worlds not realized": number v, 1841)

How often sit I, poring o'er
 My strange distorted youth,
 Seeking in vain, in all my store,
 One feeling based on truth;
 Amid the maze of petty life, 5
 A clue whereby to move,
 A spot whereon in toil and strife
 To dare to rest and love.
 So constant as my heart would be,
 So fickle as it must, 10
 'Twere well for others as for me
 'Twere dry as summer dust.
 Excitements come, and act and speech
 Flow freely forth; — but no,
 Nor they, nor aught beside, can reach 15
 The buried world below.

QUA CURSUM VENTUS

(1849)

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
 With canvas drooping, side by side,
 Two towers of sail at dawn of day
 Are scarce long leagues apart descried;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze, 5
 And all the darkling hours they plied,
 Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
 By each was cleaving, side by side:

E'en so, but why the tale reveal
 Of those, whom year by year unchanged, 10
 Brief absence joined anew to feel,
 Astounded, soul from soul estranged?

At dead of night their sails were filled,
 And onward each rejoicing steered —
 Ah, neither blame, for neither willed, 15
 Or wist, what first with dawn appeared!

To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
 Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
 Through winds and tides one compass guides —

To that, and your own selves, be true. 20

But O blithe breeze; and O great seas,
 Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
 On your wide plain they join again,
 Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought, 25
 One purpose hold where'er they fare, —
 O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
 At last, at last, unite them there!

From AMOURS DE VOYAGE

(1849)

(Proem of Canto First)

Over the great windy waters, and over the
 clear-crested summits,
 Unto the sun and the sky, and unto the
 perfecter earth,

Come, let us go, — to a land wherein gods
of the old time wandered,
Where every breath even now changes to
ether divine.

Come, let us go; though withal a voice
whisper, "The world that we live in, 5
Whithersoever we turn, still is the same
narrow crib;

'Tis but to prove limitation, and measure a
cord, that we travel;

Let who would 'scape and be free go to
his chamber and think;

'Tis but to change idle fancies for mem-
ories wilfully falser;

'Tis but to go and have been." — Come,
little bark! let us go. 10

(From Canto First, Section II)

Rome disappoints me still; but I shrink
and adapt myself to it. 35

Somehow a tyrannous sense of a super-
incumbent oppression

Still, wherever I go, accompanies ever, and
makes me

Feel like a tree (shall I say?) buried
under a ruin of brickwork.

Rome, believe me, my friend, is like its
own Monte Testaccio,

Merely a marvelous mass of broken and
castaway wine-pots. 40

Ye gods! what do I want with this rubbish
of ages departed,

Things that Nature abhors, the experi-
ments that she has failed in?

What do I find in the Forum? An arch-
way and two or three pillars.

Well, but St. Peter's? Alas, Bernini has
filled it with sculpture!

No one can cavil, I grant, at the size of the
great Coliseum. 45

Doubtless the notion of grand and capa-
cious and massive amusement,

This the old Romans had; but tell me, is
this an idea?

Yet of solidity much, but of splendor little
is extant:

"Brickwork I found thee, and marble I
left thee!" their Emperor vaunted;

"Marble I thought thee, and brickwork I
find thee!" the Tourist may answer. 50

(Proem of Canto Second)

Is it illusion? or does there a spirit from
perfecter ages,

Here, even yet, amid loss, change, and cor-
ruption abide?

Does there a spirit we know not, though
seek, though we find, comprehend not,

Here to entice and confuse, tempt and
evade us, abide?

Lives in the exquisite grace of the column
disjointed and single, 5

Haunts the rude masses of brick gar-
landed gaily with vine,

E'en in the turret fantastic surviving that
springs from the ruin,

E'en in the people itself? is it illusion or
not?

Is it illusion or not that attracteth the
pilgrim transalpine,

Brings him a dullard and dunce hither
to pry and to stare? 10

Is it illusion or not that allures the bar-
barian stranger,

Brings him with gold to the shrine,
brings him in arms to the gate?

THE LATEST DECALOGUE

(1862)

Thou shalt have one God only; who
Would be at the expense of two?

No graven images may be
Worshipped, except the currency:

Swear not at all; for, for thy curse 5
Thine enemy is none the worse:

At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to keep the world thy friend:

Honor thy parents: that is, all
From whom advancement may befall; 10

Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive:

Do not adultery commit;

Advantage rarely comes of it:

Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat, 15
 When it's so lucrative to cheat:
 Bear not false witness; let the lie
 Have time on its own wings to fly:
 Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
 Approves all forms of competition. 20

From DIPSYCHUS

(1849)

(*From Part First, scene v*)

"There is no God," the wicked saith,
 "And truly it's a blessing,
 For what He might have done with us
 It's better only guessing."

"There is no God," a youngster thinks, 5
 "Or really, if there may be,
 He surely did not mean a man
 Always to be a baby."

"There is no God, or if there is,"
 The tradesman thinks, "'twere funny 10
 If He should take it ill in me
 To make a little money."

"Whether there be," the rich man says,
 "It matters very little,
 For I and mine, thank somebody, 15
 Are not in want of victual."

Some others, also, to themselves,
 Who scarce so much as doubt it,
 Think there is none, when they are well
 And do not think about it. 20

But country folks who live beneath
 The shadow of the steeple;
 The parson and the parson's wife,
 And mostly married people;

Youths green and happy in first love, 25
 So thankful for illusion;
 And men caught out in what the world
 Calls guilt, in first confusion;

And almost every one when age,
 Disease, or sorrows strike him, 30
 Inclines to think there is a God,
 Or something very like Him.

(*From Part Second, scene II*)

Our gaieties, our luxuries,
 Our pleasures and our glee,
 Mere insolence and wantonness,
 Alas! they feel to me.

How shall I laugh and sing and dance? 5
 My very heart recoils,
 While here to give my mirth a chance
 A hungry brother toils.

The joy that does not spring from joy
 Which I in others see, 10
 How can I venture to employ,
 Or find it joy for me?

(*From Part Second, scene II*)

Where are the great, whom thou would'st
 wish to praise thee?
 Where are the pure, whom thou would'st
 choose to love thee?
 Where are the brave, to stand supreme
 above thee,
 Whose high commands would cheer, whose
 chiding raise thee?
 Seek, seeker, in thyself; submit to find 5
 In the stones, bread, and life in the blank
 mind.

EASTER DAY

(*Naples, 1849*)

Through the great sinful streets of Naples
 as I passed,
 With fiercer heat than flamed above my
 head
 My heart was hot within me; till at last
 My brain was lightened when my tongue
 had said:
 Christ is not risen! 5
 Christ is not risen, no —
 He lies and moulders low;
 Christ is not risen!

What though the stone were rolled away,
 and though
 The grave found empty there? — 10
 If not there, then elsewhere;

If not where Joseph laid Him first, why
then

Where other men

Translaid Him after, in some humbler
clay.

Long ere today 15

Corruption that sad perfect work hath
done,

Which here she scarcely, lightly, had
begun:

The foul engendered worm

Feeds on the flesh of the life-giving form
Of our most Holy and Anointed One. 20

He is not risen, no —

He lies and moulders low;

Christ is not risen!

What if the women, ere the dawn was
gray,

Saw one or more great angels, as they
say 25

(Angels, or Him himself)? Yet neither
there, nor then,

Nor afterwards, nor elsewhere, nor at all,
Hath He appeared to Peter or the Ten;

Nor save in thunderous terror, to blind
Saul;

Save in an after Gospel and late Creed, 30
He is not risen, indeed, —

Christ is not risen!

Or, what if e'en, as runs a tale, the Ten
Saw, heard, and touched, again and yet
again?

What if at Emmaus' inn, and by Caper-
naum's Lake, 35

Came One, the bread that brake —

Came One that spake as never mortal
spake,

And with them ate, and drank, and stood,
and walked about?

Ah? "some" did well to "doubt!"

Ah! the true Christ, while these things
came to pass, 40

Nor heard, nor spake, nor walked, nor
lived, alas!

He was not risen, no —

He lay and mouldered low,

Christ was not risen!

As circulates in some great city crowd 45
A rumor changeful, vague, importunate,
and loud,

From no determined centre or of fact
Or authorship exact,

Which no man can deny

Nor verify; 50

So spread the wondrous fame;

He all the same

Lay senseless, mouldering, low:

He was not risen, no —

Christ was not risen!

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;

As of the unjust, also of the just —

Yea, of that Just One, too!

This is the one sad Gospel that is true —

Christ is not risen! 60

Is He not risen, and shall we not rise?

Oh, we unwise!

What did we dream, what wake we to
discover?

Ye hills, fall on us, and ye mountains,
cover!

In darkness and great gloom 65

Come ere we thought it is *our* day of
doom;

From the cursed world, which is one tomb,
Christ is not risen!

Eat, drink, and play, and think that this is
bliss:

There is no heaven but this; 70

There is no hell,

Save earth, which serves the purpose
doubly well,

Seeing it visits still

With equallest apportionment of ill

Both good and bad alike, and brings to one
same dust 75

The unjust and the just

With Christ, who is not risen.

Eat, drink, and die, for we are souls be-
reaved:

Of all the creatures under heaven's wide
cope

We are most hopeless, who had once
most hope, 80

And most beliefless, that had most be-
lieved.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
As of the unjust, also of the just —
Yea, of that Just One too!

It is the one sad gospel that is
true — 85

Christ is not risen!

Weep not beside the tomb,

Ye women, unto whom

He was great solace while ye tended
Him;

Ye who with napkin o'er the head 90
And folds of linen round each wounded
limb

Laid out the Sacred Dead;

And thou that bar'st Him in thy wonder-
ing womb;

Yea, Daughters of Jerusalem, depart,
Bind up as best ye may your own sad
bleeding heart; 95

Go to your homes, your living children
tend,

Your earthly spouses love;

Set your affections *not* on things
above,

Which moth and rust corrupt, which
quickest come to end:

Or pray, if pray ye must, and pray, if
pray ye can, 100

For death; since dead is He whom ye
deemed more than man,

Who is not risen: no —

But lies and moulders low —

Who is not risen!

Ye men of Galilee! 105

Why stand ye looking up to heaven, where
Him ye ne'er may see,

Neither ascending hence, nor returning
hither again?

Ye ignorant and idle fishermen!

Hence to your huts, and boats, and inland
native shore,

And catch not men, but fish; 110

Whate'er things ye might wish,

Him neither here nor there ye e'er shall
meet with more.

Ye poor deluded youths, go home,
Mend the old nets ye left to roam,
Tie the split oar, patch the torn sail;
It was indeed an "idle tale" — 116

He was not risen!

And, oh, good men of ages yet to be,
Who shall believe *because* ye did not see —

Oh, be ye warned, be wise! 120

Nor more with pleading eyes,

And sobs of strong desire,

Unto the empty vacant void aspire,

Seeking another and impossible birth
That is not of your own and only mother
earth. 125

But if there is no other life for you,
Sit down and be content, since this *must*
even do;

He is not risen!

One look, and then depart,

Ye humble and ye holy men of
heart; 130

And ye! ye ministers and stewards of a
Word

Which ye would preach, because another
heard —

Ye worshippers of that ye do not
know,

Take these things hence and go: —

He is not risen! 135

Here, on our Easter Day

We rise, we come, and lo! we find Him
not,

Gardener nor other, on the sacred spot:

Where they have laid Him there is none to
say;

No sound, nor in, nor out — no word 140

Of where to seek the dead or meet the
living Lord.

There is no glistering of an angel's wings,

There is no voice of heavenly clear behest:

Let us go hence, and think upon these
things

In silence, which is best. 145

Is He not risen? No —

But lies and moulders low?

Christ is not risen?

EASTER DAY

II

So in the sinful streets, abstracted and alone,

I with my secret self held communing of mine own.

So in the southern city spake the tongue
Of one that somewhat overwildly sung,
But in a later hour I sat and heard 5
Another voice that spake — another graver word.

Weep not, it bade, whatever hath been said,

Though He be dead, He is not dead.

In the true creed

He is yet risen indeed; 10

Christ is yet risen.

Weep not beside His Tomb,

Ye women unto whom

He was great comfort and yet greater grief;

Nor ye, ye faithful few that wont with Him to roam, 15

Seek sadly what for Him ye left, go hopeless to your home;

Nor ye despair, ye sharers yet to be of their belief;

Though He be dead, He is not dead,

Nor gone, though fled,

Not lost, though vanishèd; 20

Though He return not, though

He lies and moulders low;

In the true creed

He is yet risen indeed;

Christ is yet risen. 25

Sit if ye will, sit down upon the ground,
Yet not to weep and wail, but calmly look around.

Whate'er befell,

Earth is not hell;

Now, too, as when it first began, 30

Life is yet life, and man is man.

For all that breathe beneath the heaven's high cope,

Joy with grief mixes, with despondence hope.

Hope conquers cowardice, joy grief;

Or at least, faith unbelief. 35

Though dead, not dead;

Not gone, though fled;

Not lost, though vanishèd.

In the great gospel and true creed,

He is yet risen indeed; 40

Christ is yet risen.

AH! YET CONSIDER IT AGAIN!

(1851)

"Old things need not be therefore true,"

O brother men, nor yet the new;

Ah! still awhile the old thought retain,

And yet consider it again!

The souls of now two thousand years 5

Have laid up here their toils and fears,

And all the earnings of their pain, —

Ah, yet consider it again!

We! what do we see? each a space

Of some few yards before his face; 10

Does that the whole wide plan explain?

Ah, yet consider it again!

Alas! the great world goes its way,

And takes its truth from each new day;

They do not quit, nor can retain, 15

Far less consider it again.

SEHNSUCHT

(1869)

Whence are ye, vague desires,

Which carry men along,

However proud and strong;

Which, having ruled today,

Tomorrow pass away? 5

Whence are ye, vague desires?

Whence are ye?

Which women, yielding to,

Find still so good and true;

So true, so good today, 10

Tomorrow gone away,

Whence are ye, vague desires?

Whence are ye?

From seats of bliss above,
Where angels sing of love; 15
From subtle airs around,
Or from the vulgar ground,
Whence are ye, vague desires?
Whence are ye?

A message from the blest, 20
Or bodily unrest;
A call to heavenly good,
A fever in the blood:
What are ye, vague desires?
What are ye? 25

Which men who know you best
Are proof against the least,
And rushing on today,
Tomorrow cast away.
What are ye, vague desires? 30
What are ye?

Which women, ever new,
Still warned, surrender to;
Adored with you today,
Then cast with you away, 35
What are ye, vague desires?
What are ye?

Which unto boyhood's heart
The force of man impart,
And pass, and leave it cold, 40
And prematurely old,
What are ye, vague desires?
What are ye?

Which, tremblingly confest,
Pour in the young girl's breast 45
Joy, joy — the like is none,
And leave her then undone —
What are ye, vague desires?
What are ye?

Ah yet! though man be marred, 50
Ignoble made, and hard;
Though broken women lie
In anguish down to die;
Ah yet! ye vague desires,
Ah yet! 55

By Him who gave you birth,
And blended you with earth,
Was some good end designed
For man and womankind;
Ah yet! ye vague desires, 60
Ah yet!

The petals of today,
Tomorrow fallen away,
Shall something leave instead,
To live when they are dead; 65
When you, ye vague desires,
Have vanished;

A something to survive,
Of you though it derive 70
Apparent earthly birth,
But of far other worth
Than you, ye vague desires,
Than you.

From SONGS IN ABSENCE

(1852-53)

Some future day when what is now is not,
When all old faults and follies are for-
got,
And thoughts of difference passed like
dreams away, 40
We'll meet again, upon some future day.

When all that hindered, all that vexed our
love, 5
As tall rank weeds will climb the blade
above,
When all but it has yielded to decay,
We'll meet again upon some future day.

When we have proved, each on his course
alone,
The wider world, and learned what's now
unknown, 10
Have made life clear, and worked out each
a way,
We'll meet again, — we shall have much
to say.

With happier mood, and feelings born
anew,
Our boyhood's bygone fancies we'll review,
Talk o'er old talks, play as we used to
play, 15
And meet again, on many a future day.

Some day, which oft our hearts shall yearn
to see,
In some far year, though distant yet to be,
Shall we indeed, — ye winds and waters,
say! —
Meet yet again, upon some future day? 20

Where lies the land to which the ship
would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from?
Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noons upon the deck's smooth
face, 5
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to
pace;
Or, o'er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far widening as we go.

On stormy nights when wild north-
westers rave,
How proud a thing to fight with wind and
wave! 10
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship
would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from?
Away, 15
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

Am I with you, or you with me?
Or in some blessed place above,
Where neither lands divide nor sea,
Are we united in our love?

Oft while in longing here I lie, 5
That wasting ever still endures;
My soul out from me seems to fly,
And half-way, somewhere, meet with
yours.

Somewhere — but where I cannot guess:
Beyond, may be, the bound of space, 10
The liberated spirits press
And meet, bless heaven, and embrace.

It seems not either here nor there,
Somewhere between us up above,
A region of a clearer air, 15
The dwelling of a purer love.

The mighty ocean rolls and raves,
To part us with its angry waves;
But arch on arch from shore to shore,
In a vast fabric reaching o'er,

With careful labors daily wrought 5
By steady hope and tender thought,
The wide and weltering waste above —
Our hearts have bridged it with their love.

Their fond anticipations fly
To rear the growing structure high; 10
Dear memories upon either side
Combine to make it large and wide.

There, happy fancies, day by day,
New courses sedulously lay;
There soft solitudes, sweet fears, 15
And doubts accumulate, and tears.

While the pure purpose of the soul,
To form of many parts a whole,
To make them strong and hold them true
From end to end, is carried through. 20

Then when the waters war between,
Upon the masonry unseen,
Secure and swift, from shore to shore,
With silent footfall travelling o'er,

Our sundered spirits come and go, 25
 Hither and thither, to and fro,
 Pass and repass, now linger near,
 Now part, anew to reappear.

With motions of glad surprise,
 We meet each other's wondering eyes, 30
 At work, at play, when people talk,
 And when we sleep; and when we walk

Each dawning day my eyelids see
 You come, methinks, across to me,
 And I, at every hour anew 35
 Could dream I travelled o'er to you.

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH

(1849)

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
 The labor and the wounds are vain,
 The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
 And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars; 5
 It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
 Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
 And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
 Seem here no painful inch to gain, 10
 Far back, through creeks and inlets
 making,
 Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
 When daylight comes, comes in the
 light,
 In front, the sun climbs slow, how
 slowly, 15
 But westward, look, the land is bright.

HOPE EVERMORE AND BELIEVE!

(1862)

Hope evermore and believe, O man, for
 e'en as thy thought
 So are the things that thou see'st; e'en
 as thy hope and belief.

Cowardly art thou and timid? they rise to
 provoke thee against them;
 Hast thou courage? enough, see them
 exulting to yield.

Yea, the rough rock, the dull earth, the
 wild sea's furling waters 5
 (Violent say'st thou and hard, mighty
 thou think'st to destroy),
 All with ineffable longing are waiting their
 invader,

All, with one varying voice, call to him,
 Come and subdue;
 Still for their conqueror call, and, but for
 the joy of being conquered
 (Rapture they will not forego), dare to
 resist and rebel; 10

Still, when resisting and raging, in soft
 undervoice say unto him,
 Fear not, retire not, O man; hope ever-
 more and believe.

Go from the east to the west, as the sun
 and the stars direct thee,
 Go with the girdle of man, go and en-
 compass the earth.

Not for the gain of the gold; for the get-
 ting, the hoarding, the having, 15
 But for the joy of the deed; but for the
 Duty to do.

Go with the spiritual life, the higher
 volition and action,
 With the great girdle of God, go and
 encompass the earth.

Go; say not in thy heart, And what then
 were it accomplished,
 Were the wild impulse allayed, what
 were the use or the good! 20

Go, when the instinct is stilled, and when
 the deed is accomplished,
 What thou hast done and shalt do, shall
 be declared to thee then.

Go with the sun and the stars, and yet
 evermore in thy spirit
 Say to thyself: It is good: yet is there
 better than it.

This that I see is not all, and this that I do
 is but little; 25
 Nevertheless it is good, though there is
 better than it.

QUI LABORAT, ORAT

(1862)

O only Source of all our light and life,
Whom as our truth, our strength, we
see and feel,
But whom the hours of mortal moral strife
Alone aright reveal!

Mine inmost soul, before Thee inly
brought, 5
Thy presence owns ineffable, divine;
Chastised each rebel self-encentred
thought,
My will adareth Thine.

With eye down-dropped, if then this
earthly mind
Speechless remain, or speechless e'en
depart; 10
Nor seek to see — for what of earthly kind
Can see Thee as Thou art? —

If well-assured 'tis but profanely bold
In thought's abstractest forms to seem
to see,
It dare not dare the dread communion
hold 15
In ways unworthy Thee,

O not unowned, thou shalt unnamed for-
give,
In worldly walks the prayerless heart
prepare;
And if in work its life it seem to live,
Shalt make that work be prayer. 20

Nor times shall lack, when while the work
it plies,
Unsummoned powers the blinding film
shall part,
And scarce by happy tears made dim, the
eyes
In recognition start.

But, as thou willest, give or e'en forbear 25
The beatific supersensual sight,
So, with Thy blessing blessed, that hum-
bler prayer
Approach Thee morn and night.

ὕμνος ἄνυμνος

(1862)

O Thou whose image in the shrine
Of human spirits dwells divine;
Which from that precinct once conveyed,
To be to outer day displayed,
Doth vanish, part, and leave behind 5
Mere blank and void of empty mind,
Which wilful fancy seeks in vain
With casual shapes to fill again!

O Thou that in our bosom's shrine
Dost dwell, unknown because divine! 10
I thought to speak, I thought to say,
"The light is here," "behold the way,"
"The voice was thus," and "thus the
word,"
And "thus I saw," and "that I heard." —
But from the lips that half essayed 15
The imperfect utterance fell unmade.

O Thou, in that mysterious shrine
Enthroned, as I must say, divine!
I will not frame one thought of what
Thou mayest either be or not, 20
I will not prate of "thus" and "so,"
And be profane with "yes" and "no,"
Enough that in our soul and heart
Thou, whatsoe'er Thou may'st be, art.

Unseen, secure in that high shrine 25
Acknowledged present and divine,
I will not ask some upper air,
Some future day to place Thee there;
Nor say, nor yet deny, such men
And women saw Thee thus and then: 30
Thy name was such, and there or here
To him or her Thou didst appear.

Do only Thou in that dim shrine,
Unknown or known, remain, divine;
There, or if not, at least in eyes 35
That scan the fact that round them lies,
The hand to sway, the judgment guide,
In sight and sense Thyself divide:
Be Thou but there, — in soul and heart,
I will not ask to feel Thou art. 40

"WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLE-
NESS, NEITHER SHADOW
OF TURNING"

(1862)

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so:
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

5

ALL IS WELL

(1869)

Whate'er you dream, with doubt possessed,
Keep, keep it snug within your breast,
And lay you down and take your rest;
Forget in sleep the doubt and pain,
And when you wake, to work again.
The wind it blows, the vessel goes,
And where and whither, no one knows.
'Twill all be well: no need of care;
Though how it will, and when, and where,
We cannot see, and can't declare.
In spite of dreams, in spite of thought,
'Tis not in vain, and not for nought,
The wind it blows, the ship is goes,
Though where and whither, no one knows.

5

10

IN A LONDON SQUARE

(1869)

Put forth thy leaf, thou lofty plane,
East wind and frost are safely gone;
With zephyr mild and balmy rain
The summer comes serenely on;
Earth, air, and sun and skies combine
To promise all that's kind and fair:—
But thou, O human heart of mine,
Be still, contain thyself, and bear.

5

December days were brief and chill,
The winds of March were wild and
drear,
And, nearing and receding still,
Spring never would, we thought, be here.

10

The leaves that burst, the suns that shine,
Had, not the less, their certain date:—
And thou, O human heart of mine,
Be still, refrain thyself, and wait.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

(1822-1888)

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

(1849)

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!
Call her once before you go —
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain —
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

5

10

15

20

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little gray church on the windy
shore,
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

30

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,

The far-off sound of a silver bell?
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep, 35
 Where the winds are all asleep;
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
 Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture-
 ground; 40
 Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
 Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
 Where great whales come sailing by,
 Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
 Round the world for ever and aye? 45
 When did music come this way?
 Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
 (Call yet once) that she went away?
 Once she sate with you and me, 50
 On a red gold throne in the heart of the
 sea,

And the youngest sate on her knee.
 She combed its bright hair, and she
 tended it well,

When down swung the sound of a far-off
 bell.

She sighed, she looked up through the clear
 green sea; 55

She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
 In the little gray church on the shore to-
 day.

'Twill be Easter-time in the world — ah
 me!

And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here
 with thee."

I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the
 waves; 60

Say thy prayer, and come back to the
 kind sea-caves!"

She smiled, she went up through the surf
 in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?

"The sea grows stormy, the little ones
 moan; 65

Long prayers," I said, "in the world they
 say;

Come!" I said: and we rose through the
 surf in the bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy
 down

Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-
 walled town;

Through the narrow paved streets, where
 all was still, 70

To the little gray church on the windy
 hill.

From the church came a murmur of folk
 at their prayers,

But we stood without in the cold blowing
 airs.

We climbed on the graves, on the stones
 worn with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the
 small leaded panes. 75

She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
 "Margaret, hist! come quick, we are
 here!

Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
 The sea grows stormy, the little ones
 moan."

But, ah, she gave me never a look, 80

For her eyes were sealed to the holy book!
 Loud prays the priest; shut stands the

door.

Come away, children, call no more!

Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down! 85

Down to the depths of the sea!

She sits at her wheel in the humming
 town,

Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,

For the humming street, and the child
 with its toy! 90

For the priest and the bell, and the holy
 well;

For the wheel where I spun,

And the blessed light of the sun!"

And so she sings her fill,

Singing most joyfully, 95

Till the spindle drops from her hand,

And the whizzing wheel stands still.

She steals to the window, and looks at
 the sand,

And over the sand at the sea;
 And her eyes are set in a stare; 100
 And anon there breaks a sigh,
 And anon there drops a tear,
 From a sorrow-clouded eye,
 And a heart sorrow-laden,
 A long, long sigh; 105
 For the cold strange eyes of a little Mer-
 maiden
 And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children;
 Come children, come down!
 The hoarse wind blows coldly; 110
 Lights shine in the town.
 She will start from her slumber
 When gusts shake the door;
 She will hear the winds howling,
 Will hear the waves roar. 115
 We shall see, while above us
 The waves roar and whirl,
 A ceiling of amber,
 A pavement of pearl.
 Singing: "Here came a mortal, 120
 But faithless was she!
 And alone dwell for ever
 The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
 When soft the winds blow, 125
 When clear falls the moonlight,
 When spring tides are low;
 When sweet airs come seaward
 From heaths starred with broom,
 And high rocks throw mildly 130
 On the blanched sands a gloom;
 Up the still, glistening beaches,
 Up the creeks we will hie,
 Over banks of bright seaweed
 The ebb-tide leaves dry. 135
 We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
 At the white, sleeping town;
 At the church on the hill-side—
 And then come back down.
 Singing: "There dwells a loved one, 140
 But cruel is she!
 She left lonely for ever
 The kings of the sea."

QUIET WORK

(1849)

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
 One lesson which in every wind is blown,
 One lesson of two duties kept at one
 Though the loud world proclaim their en-
 mity—
 Of toil unsevered from tranquillity! 5
 Of labor, that in lasting fruit outgrows
 Far noisier schemes, accomplished in re-
 pose,
 Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!
 Yes, while on earth a thousand discords
 ring,
 Man's fitful uproar mingling with his
 toil, 10
 Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,
 Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
 Still working, blaming still our vain tur-
 moil,
 Laborers that shall not fail, when man is
 gone.

IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

(1849)

"In harmony with Nature"? Restless fool,
 Who with such heat dost preach what
 were to thee,
 When true, the last impossibility; 125
 To be like Nature strong, like Nature
 cool:—
 Know, man hath all which Nature hath,
 but more, 5
 And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good.
 Nature is cruel; man is sick of blood:
 Nature is stubborn; man would fain
 adore:
 Nature is fickle; man hath need of rest:
 Nature forgives no debt, and fears no
 grave; 10
 Man would be mild, and with safe con-
 science blest.
 Man must begin, know this, where Nature
 ends;
 Nature and man can never be fast friends.
 Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her
 slave!

TO A FRIEND

(1849)

Who prop, thou' ask'st, in these bad days,
 my mind?—
 He much, the old man, who, clearest-
 souled of men,
 Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian
 Fen,
 And Tmolus hill, and Smyrna bay, though
 blind.
 Much he, whose friendship I not long since
 won, 5
 That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
 Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal
 son
 Cleared Rome of what most shamed him.
 But be his
 My special thanks, whose even-balanced
 soul,
 From first youth tested up to extreme old
 age, 10
 Business could not make dull, nor passion
 wild;
 Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole;
 The mellow glory of the Attic stage,
 Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.

SHAKESPEARE

(1849)

Others abide our question. Thou art
 free.
 We ask and ask — Thou smilest and art
 still,
 Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest
 hill,
 Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
 Planting his steadfast footsteps in the
 sea, 5
 Making the heaven of heavens his dwell-
 ing-place,
 Spares but the cloudy border of his base
 To the foiled searching of mortality;
 And thou, who didst the stars and sun-
 beams know,
 Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored,
 self-secure, 10

Didst tread on earth unguessed at. —
 Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
 All weakness which impairs, all griefs
 which bow,
 Find their sole speech in that victorious
 brow.

TO A REPUBLICAN FRIEND, 1848

(1849)

God knows it, I am with you. If to prize
 Those virtues, prized and practised by too
 few,
 But prized, but loved, but eminent in you,
 Man's fundamental life; if to despise
 The barren optimistic sophistries 5
 Of comfortable moles, whom what they do
 Teaches the limit of the just and true
 (And for such doing have no need of
 eyes);
 If sadness at the long heart-wasting show
 Wherein earth's great ones are dis-
 quieted; 10
 If thoughts, not idle, while before me
 flow
 The armies of the homeless and unfed; —
 If these are yours, if this is what you are,
 Then am I yours, and what you feel, I
 share.

(CONTINUED)

Yet, when I muse on what life is, I seem
 Rather to patience prompted, than that
 proud
 Prospect of hope which France proclaims
 so loud —
 France, famed in all great arts, in none
 supreme;
 Seeing this vale, this earth, whereon we
 dream, 5
 Is on all sides o'ershadowed by the high
 Unorleaped mountains of Necessity,
 Sparing us narrower margin than we
 deem.
 Nor will that day dawn at a human nod,
 When, bursting through the network
 superposed 10

By selfish occupation — plot and plan,
Lust, avarice, envy — liberated man,
All difference with his fellow-mortal
closed,
Shall be left standing face to face with
God.

RELIGIOUS ISOLATION

(1849)

Children (as such forgive them) have I
known,
Ever in their own eager pastime bent
To make the incurious bystander, intent
On his own swarming thoughts, an interest
own;
Too fearful or too fond to play alone. 5
Do thou, whom light in thine own inmost
soul
(Not less thy boast) illuminates, control
Wishes unworthy of a man full-grown.
What though the holy secret which moulds
thee
Moulds not the solid earth? though never
winds 10
Have whispered it to the complaining sea,
Nature's great law, and law of all men's
minds?
To its own impulse every creature stirs:
Live by thy light, and Earth will live by
hers.

MEMORIAL VERSES

April, 1850

Goethe in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
But one such death remained to come;
The last poetic voice is dumb —
We stand today by Wordsworth's tomb. 5

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bowed our head and held our breath.
He taught us little; but our soul
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
With shivering heart the strife we saw 10
Of passion with eternal law;
And yet with reverential awe

We watched the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said: 15
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the iron age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness
clear; 20

And struck his finger on the place,
And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*
He looked on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plunged down the weltering
strife, 25

The turmoil of expiring life —
He said: *The end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there!
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below 30
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! — Ah, pale ghosts, re-
joice!

For never has such soothing voice 35
Been to your shadowy world conveyed,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us — and
ye, 40

Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen — on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound 45
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease; 50
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth returned; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead, 55

Spirits dried up and closely furled,
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course 60
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel; 65
Others will strengthen us to bear—
But who, ah! who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny—
Others will front it fearlessly:
But who, like him, will put it by? 70

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE AUTHOR OF "OBERMANN"

(1852)

In front the awful Alpine track
Crawls up its rocky stair;
The autumn storm-winds drive the rack,
Close o'er it, in the air.

Behind are the abandoned baths 5
Mute in their meadows lone;
The leaves are on the valley-paths,
The mists are on the Rhone—

The white mists rolling like a sea!
I hear the torrents roar. 10
—Yes, Obermann, all speaks of thee;
I feel thee near once more!

I turn thy leaves! I feel their breath
Once more upon me roll;
That air of languor, cold, and death, 15
Which brooded o'er thy soul.

Fly hence, poor wretch, whoe'er thou art,
Condemned to cast about,
All shipwreck in thy own weak heart,
For comfort from without! 20

A fever in these pages burns
Beneath the calm they feign;
A wounded human spirit turns,
Here, on its bed of pain.

Yes, though the virgin mountain-air 25
Fresh through these pages blows;
Though to these leaves the glaciers spare
The soul of their white snows;

Though here a mountain-murmur swells
Of many a dark-boughed pine; 30
Though, as you read, you hear the bells
Of the high-pasturing kine—

Yet, through the hum of torrent lone,
And brooding mountain-bee,
There sobs I know not what ground-
tone 35
Of human agony.

Is it for this, because the sound
Is fraught too deep with pain,
That, Obermann! the world around
So little loves thy strain? 40

Some secrets may the poet tell,
For the world loves new ways;
To tell too deep ones is not well—
It knows not what he says.

Yet, of the spirits who have reigned 45
In this our troubled day,
I know but two, who have attained
Save thee, to see their way.

By England's lakes, in gray old age,
His quiet home one keeps; 50
And one, the strong much-toiling sage,
In German Weimar sleeps.

But Wordsworth's eyes avert their ken
From half of human fate;
And Goethe's course few sons of men 55
May think to emulate.

For he pursued a lonely road,
His eyes on Nature's plan;
Neither made man too much a God,
Nor God too much a man. 60

Strong was he, with a spirit free
From mists, and sane, and clear;
Clearer, how much! than ours — yet we
Have a worse course to steer.

For though his manhood bore the blast 65
Of a tremendous time,
Yet in a tranquil world was passed
His tenderer youthful prime.

But we, brought forth and reared in hours
Of change, alarm, surprise — 70
What shelter to grow ripe is ours?
What leisure to grow wise?

Like children bathing on the shore,
Buried a wave beneath,
The second wave succeeds, before 75
We have had time to breathe.

Too fast we live, too much are tried,
Too harassed, to attain
Wordsworth's sweet calm, or Goethe's
wide
And luminous view to gain. 80

And then we turn, thou sadder sage,
To thee! we feel thy spell!
— The hopeless tangle of our age,
Thou too hast scanned it well!

Immovable thou sittest, still 85
As death, composed to bear!
Thy head is clear, thy feeling chill,
And icy thy despair.

Yes, as the son of Thetis said,
I hear thee saying now: 90
*Greater by far than thou are dead;
Strive not! die also thou!*

Ah! two desires toss about
The poet's feverish blood.
One drives him to the world without, 95
And one to solitude.

*The glow, he cries, the thrill of life,
Where, where do these abound? —
Not in the world, not in the strife
Of men, shall they be found.* 100

He who hath watched, not shared, the
strife,
Knows how the day hath gone.
He only lives with the world's life,
Who hath renounced his own.

To thee we come, then! Clouds are rolled
Where thou, O seer! art set; 106
Thy realm of thought is drear and cold —
The world is colder yet!

And thou hast pleasures, too, to share
With those who come to thee — 110
Balms floating on thy mountain-air,
And healing sights to see.

How often, where the slopes are green
On Jaman, hast thou sate
By some high chalet-door, and seen 115
The summer-day grow late;

And darkness steal o'er the wet grass
With the pale crocus starred,
And reach that glimmering sheet of glass
Beneath the piny sward, 120

Lake Leman's waters, far below!
And watched the rosy light
Fade from the distant peaks of snow;
And on the air of night

Heard accents of the eternal tongue 125
Through the pine branches play —
Listened, and felt thyself grow young!
Listened and wept — Away!

Away the dreams that but deceive
And thou, sad guide, adieu! 130
I go, fate drives me; but I leave
Half of my life with you.

We, in some unknown Power's employ,
Move on a rigorous line;
Can neither, when we will, enjoy, 135
Nor, when we will, resign.

I in the world must live; but thou,
Thou melancholy shade!
Wilt not, if thou canst see me now,
Condemn me, nor upbraid. 140

For thou art gone away from earth,
And place with those dost claim,
The Children of the Second Birth,
Whom the world could not tame;

And with that small, transfigured band, 145
Whom many a different way
Conducted to their common land,
Thou learn'st to think as they.

Christian and pagan, king and slave,
Soldier and anchorite, 150
Distinctions we esteem so grave,
Are nothing in their sight.

They do not ask, who pined unseen,
Who was on action hurled,
Whose one bond is, that all have been 155
Unspotted by the world.

There without anger thou wilt see
Him who obeys thy spell
No more, so he but rest, like thee,
Unsoiled! — and so, farewell. 160

Farewell! — Whether thou now liest
near
That much-loved inland sea,
The ripples of whose blue waves cheer
Vevey and Meillerie:

And in that gracious region bland, 165
Where with clear-rustling wave
The scented pines of Switzerland
Stand dark round thy green grave,

Between the dusty vineyard-walls
Issuing on that green place 170
The early peasant still recalls
The pensive stranger's face,

And stoops to clear thy moss-grown date
Ere he plods on again; —
Or whether, by maligner fate, 175
Among the swarms of men,

Where between granite terraces
The blue Seine rolls her wave,
The Capital of Pleasure sees
The hardly-heard-of grave; — 180

Farewell! Under the sky we part,
In the stern Alpine dell.
O unstrung will! O broken heart!
A last, a last farewell!

PROGRESS

(1852)

The Master stood upon the mount, and
taught.

He saw a fire in his disciples' eyes;
"The old law," they said, "is wholly come
to naught,
Behold the new world rise!"

"Was it," the Lord then said, "with scorn
ye saw 5
The old law observed by Scribes and
Pharisees?

I say unto you, see ye keep that law
More faithfully than these!

"Too hasty heads for ordering worlds,
alas!

Think not that I to annul the law have
willed; 10

No jot, no tittle from the law shall pass,
Till all hath been fulfilled."

So Christ said eighteen hundred years ago.
And what then shall be said to those to-
day

Who cry aloud to lay the old world low 15
To clear the new world's way?

"Religious fervors! ardor misapplied!
Hence, hence," they cry, "ye do but keep
man blind!

But keep him self-immersed, preoccupied,
And lame the active mind!" 20

Ah! from the old world let some one
answer give:

"Scorn ye this world, their tears, their in-
ward cares?

I say unto you, see that *your* souls live
A deeper life than theirs.

"Say ye: 'The spirit of man has found
 new roads, 25
 And we must leave the old faiths, and
 walk therein' ?—
 Leave then the Cross as ye have left
 carved gods,
 But guard the fire within!"

"Bright, else, and fast the stream of life
 may roll,
 And no man may the other's hurt be-
 hold; 30
 Yet each will have one anguish—his own
 soul
 Which perishes of cold."

Here let that voice make end; then, let a
 strain
 From a far lonelier distance, like the wind
 Be heard, floating through heaven, and fill
 again 35
 These men's profoundest mind:

"Children of men! the unseen Power,
 whose eye
 For ever doth accompany mankind,
 Hath looked on no religion scornfully
 That man did ever find. 40

"Which has not taught weak wills how
 much they can?
 Which has not fall'n on the dry heart like
 rain?
 Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary
 man:
Thou must be born again!

"Children of men! not that your age
 excel 45
 In pride of life the ages of your sires,
 But that ye think clear, feel deep, bear
 fruit well,
 The Friend of man desires."

REVOLUTIONS

(1852)

Before man parted for this earthly
 strand,
 While yet upon the verge of heaven he
 stood,
 God put a heap of letters in his hand,
 And bade him make with them what word
 he could.

And Man has turned them many times:
 made Greece, 5
 Rome, England, France;—yes, nor in
 vain essayed
 Way after way, changes that never cease!
 The letters have combined, something was
 made.

But ah, an inextinguishable sense
 Haunts him that he has not made what he
 should. 10
 That he has still, though old, to recom-
 mence,
 Since he has not yet found the word God
 would.

And empire after empire, at their height
 Of sway, have felt this boding sense come
 on.
 Have felt their huge frames not con-
 structed right, 15
 And drooped, and slowly died upon their
 throne.

One day, thou say'st, there will at last
 appear
 The word, the order, which God meant
 should be.
 Ah, we shall know *that* well when it
 comes near;
 The band will quit Man's heart, he will
 breathe free. 20

THE SECOND BEST

(1852)

Moderate tasks and moderate leisure,
 Quiet living, strict-kept measure
 Both in suffering and in pleasure—
 'Tis for this thy nature yearns.

But so many books thou reatest, 5
 But so many schemes thou breedest,
 But so many wishes feedest,
 That thy poor head almost turns.

And (the world 's so madly jangled,
 Human things so fast entangled) 10
 Nature's wish must now be strangled
 For that best which she discerns.

So it *must* be! yet, while leading
 A strained life, while overfeeding,
 Like the rest, his wit with reading, 15
 No small profit that man earns,

Who through all he meets can steer him,
 Can reject what cannot clear him,
 Cling to what can truly cheer him;
 Who each day more surely learns 20

That an impulse, from the distance
 Of his deepest, best existence,
 To the words, "Hope, Light, Persistence,"
 Strongly sets and truly burns.

A SUMMER NIGHT

(1852)

In the deserted, moon-blanch'd street,
 How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
 Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,
 Silent and white, unopening down,
 Repellant as the world; — but see, 5
 A break between the housetops shows
 The moon! and, lost behind her, fading
 dim

Into the dewy dark obscurity
 Down at the far horizon's rim,
 Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose! 10

And to my mind the thought
 Is on a sudden brought
 Of a past night, and a far different scene.
 Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
 As clearly as at noon; 15
 The spring-tide's brimming flow
 Heaved dazzlingly between;

Houses, with long white sweep,
 Girdled the glistening bay;
 Behind, through the soft air, 20
 The blue haze-cradled mountains spread
 away,

The night was far more fair —
 But the same restless paces to and fro,
 And the same vainly throbbing heart was
 there,
 And the same bright, calm moon. 25

And the calm moonlight seems to say:
*Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,
 Which neither deadens into rest,
 Nor ever feels the fiery glow
 That whirls the spirit from itself away, 30
 But fluctuates to and fro,
 Never by passion quite possessed
 And never quite benumbed by the world's
 sway? —*

And I, I know not if to pray
 Still to be what I am, or yield and be 35
 Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
 Where, in the sun's hot eye,
 With heads bent o'er their toil, they
 languidly
 Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork
 give, 40
 Dreaming of nought beyond their prison
 wall.

And as, year after year,
 Fresh products of their barren labor fall
 From their tired hands, and rest
 Never yet comes more near, 45
 Gloom settles slowly down over their
 breast;
 And while they try to stem
 The waves of mournful thought by which
 they are pressed,
 Death in their prison reaches them,
 Unfreed, having seen nothing, still un-
 blest. 50

And the rest, a few,
 Escape their prison and depart
 On the wide ocean of life anew.
 There the freed prisoner, where'er his
 heart

Listeth, will sail; 55
 Nor doth he know how there prevail,
 Despotic on that sea,
 Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.
 Awhile he holds some false way, unde-
 barred

By thwarting signs, and braves 60
 The freshening wind and blackening
 waves.

And then the tempest strikes him; and
 between

The lightning-bursts is seen
 Only a driving wreck,
 And the pale master on his spar-strewn
 deck 65

With anguished face and flying hair
 Grasping the rudder hard,
 Still bent to make some port he knows
 not where,
 Still standing for some false, impossible
 shore.

And sterner comes the roar 70
 Of sea and wind, and through the deep-
 ening gloom
 Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman
 loom,
 And he too disappears, and comes no
 more.

Is there no life, but these alone?
 Madman or slave, must man be one? 75

Plainness and clearness without shadow of
 stain!

Clearness divine!

Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have
 no sign

Of languor, though so calm, and, though
 so great,

Are yet untroubled and unpassionate; 80
 Who, though so noble, share in the world's
 toil,

And, though so tasked, keep free from
 dust and soil!

I will not say that your mild deeps retain
 A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
 Who have longed deeply once, and longed
 in vain — 85

But I will rather say that you remain

A world above man's head, to let him
 see

How boundless might his soul's horizons
 be,

How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
 How it were good to abide there, and
 breathe free; 90

How fair a lot to fill

Is left to each man still!

LINES

WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

(1852)

In this lone, open glade I lie,
 Screened by deep boughs on either hand;
 And at its end, to stay the eye,
 Those black-crowned, red-boled pine-trees
 stand!

Birds here make song, each bird has his, 5
 Across the girdling city's hum.
 How green under the boughs it is!
 How thick the tremulous sheep-cries
 come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
 To take his nurse his broken toy; 10
 Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
 Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
 What endless, active life is here!
 What blowing daisies, fragrant grass! 15
 An air-stirred forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain-sod
 Where the tired angler lies, stretched out,
 And, eased of basket and of rod,
 Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout. 20

In the huge world, which roars hard by,
 Be others happy if they can!
 But in my helpless cradle I
 Was breathed on by the rural Pan.

I, on men's impious uproar hurled, 25
 Think often, as I hear them rave,
 That peace has left the upper world
 And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace for ever new!
 When I who watch them am away, 30
 Still all things in this glade go through
 The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass!
 The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
 The night comes down upon the grass, 35
 The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
 To feel, amid the city's jar,
 That there abides a peace of thine,
 Man did not make, and cannot mar. 40

The will to neither strive nor cry,
 The power to feel with others give!
 Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
 Before I have begun to live.

SELF-DEPENDENCE

(1852)

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
 What I am, and what I ought to be,
 At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears
 me

Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire 5
 O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
 "Ye who from my childhood up have
 calmed me,
 Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye
 waters,

On my heart your mighty charm renew; 10
 Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
 Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of
 heaven,

Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
 In the rustling night-air came the
 answer: 15

"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as
 they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
 Undistracted by the sights they see,
 These demand not that the things without
 them

Yield them love, amusement, sympathy. 20

"And with joy the stars perform their
 shining,

And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
 For self-poised they live, nor pine with
 noting

All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregard-
 ful 25

In what state God's other works may be,
 In their own tasks all their powers pour-
 ing,

These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely
 clear,

A cry like thine in mine own heart I
 hear: 30

"Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,
 Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

MORALITY

(1852)

We cannot kindle when we will
 The fire which in the heart resides;
 The spirit bloweth and is still,
 In mystery our soul abides.

But tasks in hours of insight willed, 5
 Can be through hours of gloom ful-
 filled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
 We bear the burden and the heat
 Of the long day, and wish 'twere done. 10
 Not till the hours of light return,
 All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
 When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
 Ask, how *she* viewed thy self-control, 15

Thy struggling, tasked morality —
 Nature, whose free, light, cheerful
 air,
 Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
 Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek, 20
 See, on her face a glow is spread,
 A strong emotion on her cheek!
 "Ah, child!" she cries, "that strife
 divine,
 Whence was it, for it is not mine?"

"There is no effort on my brow — 25
 I do not strive, I do not weep;
 I rush with the swift spheres and glow
 In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
 Yet that severe, that earnest air,
 I saw, I felt it once — but where? 30

I knew not yet the gauge of time,
 Nor wore the manacles of space;
 I felt it in some other clime,
 I saw it in some other place.
 'Twas when the heavenly house I
 trod, 35
 And lay upon the breast of God."

HUMAN LIFE

(1852)

What mortal, when he saw,
 Life's voyage done, his heavenly Friend,
 Could ever yet dare tell him fearlessly:
 "I have kept unfringed my nature's law;
 The inly-written chart thou gavest me 5
 To guide me, I have steered by to the
 end?"

Ah! let us make no claim
 On life's incognizable sea
 To too exact a steering of our way;
 Let us not fret and fear to miss our aim 10
 If some fair coast has lured us to make
 stay,
 Or some friend hailed us to keep com-
 pany.

Aye, we would each fain drive
 At random, and not steer by rule!
 Weakness! and worse, weakness bestowed
 in vain! 15
 Winds from our side the unsuiting consort
 rive,
 We rush by coasts where we had lief re-
 main;
 Man cannot, though he would, live
 chance's fool.

No! as the foaming swath
 Of torn-up water, on the main, 20
 Falls heavily away with long-drawn roar
 On either side the black deep-furrowed
 path
 Cut by an onward-laboring vessel's prore,
 And never touches the ship-side again;

Even so we leave behind, 25
 As, chartered by some unknown Powers,
 We stem across the sea of life by night,
 The joys which were not for our use
 designed,
 The friends to whom we had no natural
 right,
 The homes that were not destined to be
 ours. 30

TO MARGUERITE

(1852)

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
 With echoing straits between us thrown,
 Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
 We mortal millions live *alone*.
 The islands feel the enclasping flow, 5
 And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
 And they are swept by balms of spring,
 And in their glens on starry nights
 The nightingales divinely sing; 10
 And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
 Across the sounds and channels pour —

Oh! then a longing like despair
 Is to their farthest caverns sent;

For surely once, they feel, we were 15
 Parts of a single continent!
 Now round us spreads the watery plain —
 Oh, might our margins meet again!

Who ordered, that their longing's fire
 Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled? 20
 Who renders vain their deep desire? —
 A God, a God their severance ruled!
 And bade betwixt their shores to be
 The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

THE BURIED LIFE

(1852)

Light flows our war of mocking words;
 and yet,
 Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!
 I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
 Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
 We know, we know that we can smile! 5
 But there's a something in this breast,
 To which thy light words bring no rest,
 And thy gay smiles no anodyne;
 Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
 And turn those limpid eyes on mine, 10
 And let me read there, love! thy inmost
 soul.

Alas! is even love too weak
 To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
 Are even lovers powerless to reveal
 To one another what indeed they feel? 15
 I knew the mass of men concealed
 Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
 They would by other men be met
 With blank indifference, or with blame re-
 proved;
 I knew they lived and moved 20
 Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
 Of men, and alien to themselves — and yet
 The same heart beats in every human
 breast!

But we, my love! doth a like spell benumb
 Our hearts, our voices? must we too be
 dumb? 25
 Ah! well for us, if even we,
 Even for a moment, can get free

Our heart, and have our lips unchained;
 For that which seals them hath been deep-
 ordained!

Fate, which foresaw 30
 How frivolous a baby man would be, —
 By what distractions he would be possessed,
 How he would pour himself in every
 strife,
 And well-nigh change his own identity, —
 That it might keep from his capricious
 play 35
 His genuine self, and force him to obey
 Even in his own despite his being's law,
 Bade through the deep recesses of our
 breast
 The unregarded river of our life
 Pursue with indiscernible flow its way; 40
 And that we should not see
 The buried stream, and seem to be
 Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
 Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded
 streets, 45
 But often, in the din of strife,
 There rises an unspeakable desire
 After the knowledge of our buried life;
 A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
 In tracking out our true, original
 course; 50
 A longing to inquire
 Into the mystery of this heart which beats
 So wild, so deep in us, — to know
 Whence our lives come, and where they
 go.
 And many a man in his own breast then
 delves, 55
 But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.
 And we have been on many thousand lines,
 And we have shown, on each, spirit and
 power;
 But hardly have we, for one little hour,
 Been on our own line, have we been our-
 selves, — 60
 Hardly had skill to utter one of all
 The nameless feelings that course through
 our breast,

But they course on forever unexpressed.
 And long we try in vain to speak and act
 Our hidden self, and what we say and
 do 65

Is eloquent, is well — but 'tis not true!
 And then we will no more be racked
 With inward striving, and demand
 Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
 Their stupefying power; 70
 Ah, yes, and they benumb us at our call!
 Yet still, from time to time, vague and
 forlorn,

From the soul's subterranean depth up-
 borne

As from an infinitely distant land,
 Come airs, and floating echoes, and con-
 vey 75

A melancholy into all our day.

Only — but this is rare —
 When a belovèd hand is laid in ours,
 When, jaded with the rush and glare
 Of the interminable hours, 80
 Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
 When our world-deafened ear
 Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed, —
 A bolt is shot back somewhere in our
 breast,

And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again. 85
 The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies
 plain,

And what we mean, we say, and what we
 would, we know.

A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
 And hears its winding murmur, and he
 sees

The meadows where it glides, the sun, the
 breeze. 90

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
 Wherein he doth forever chase
 The flying and elusive shadow — rest.
 An air of coolness plays upon his face,
 And an unwonted calm pervades his
 breast; 95

And then he thinks he knows
 The hills where his life rose,
 And the sea where it goes.

REQUIESCAT

(1853)

Strew on her roses, roses,
 And never a spray of yew:
 In quiet she reposes;
 Ah! would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required; 5
 She bathed it in smiles of glee.
 But her heart was tired, tired,
 And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
 In mazes of heat and sound; 10
 But for peace her soul was yearning,
 And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
 It fluttered and failed for breath;
 Tonight it doth inherit 15
 The vasty hall of death.

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

(1852)

ACT I, SCENE II

Noon. *A Glen on the highest skirts of
 the woody region of Etna*

EMPEDOCLES. PAUSANIAS

Pausanias. The noon is hot. When we
 have crossed the stream,
 We shall have left the woody tract, and
 come

Upon the open shoulder of the hill.
 See how the giant spires of yellow bloom
 Of the sun-loving gentian, in the heat, 5
 Are shining on those naked slopes like
 flame!

Let us rest here; and now, Empedocles,
 Pantheia's history!

(*A harp-note below is heard.*)

Empedocles. Hark! what sound was that
 Rose from below? If it were possible,
 And we were not so far from human
 haunt, 10

I should have said that some one touched
a harp.

Hark! there again!

Pausanias. 'Tis the boy Callicles,
The sweetest harp-player in Catana.
He is for ever coming on these hills,
In summer, to all country festivals, 15
With a gay revelling band; he breaks from
them

Sometimes, and wanders far among the
glens.

But heed him not, he will not mount to us;
I spoke with him this morning. Once
more, therefore,

Instruct me of Pantheia's story, Master, 20
As I have prayed thee.

Empedocles. That? and to what end?

Pausanias. It is enough that all men
speak of it.

But I will also say, that when the Gods
Visit us as they do with sign and plague,
To know those spells of thine that stay
their hand 25

Were to live free from terror.

Empedocles. Spells? Mistrust them.
Mind is the spell which governs earth and
heaven.

Man has a mind with which to plan his
safety;

Know that, and help thyself.

Pausanias. But thine own words? —
"The wit and counsel of man was never
clear, 30

Troubles confuse the little wit he has."

Mind is a light which the Gods mock us
with,

To lead those false who trust it.

(*The harp sounds again.*)

Empedocles. Hist! once more!

Listen, Pausanias! — Aye, 'tis Callicles;
I know those notes among a thousand.
Hark! 35

Callicles

(*Sings unseen, from below.*)

The track winds down to the clear stream,
To cross the sparkling shallows; there
The cattle love to gather, on their way

To the high mountain pastures, and to
stay,

Till the rough cow-herds drive them
past, 40

Knee-deep in the cool ford; for 'tis the
last

Of all the woody, high, well-watered dells
On Etna; and the beam

Of noon is broken there by chestnut
boughs

Down its steep verdant sides; the air 45
Is freshened by the leaping stream, which
throws

Eternal showers of spray on the mossed
roofs

Of trees, and veins of turf, and long dark
shoots

Of ivy-plants, and fragrant hanging bells
Of hyacinths, and on late anemonies, 50

That muffle its wet banks; but glade,
And stream, and sward, and chestnut
trees,

End here; Etna beyond, in the broad glare
Of the hot noon, without a shade,

Slope behind slope, up to the peak, lies
bare; 55

The peak, round which the white clouds
play.

In such a glen, on such a day,

On Pelion, on the grassy ground,

Chiron, the agèd Centaur, lay,

The young Achilles standing by. 60

The Centaur taught him to explore

The mountains; where the glens are dry

And the tired Centaurs come to rest,

And where the soaking springs abound

And the straight ashes grow for
spears, 65

And where the hill-goats come to feed,

And the sea-eagles build their nest.

He showed him Phthia far away,

And said: O boy, I taught this lore

To Peleus, in long distant years! 70

He told him of the Gods, the stars,

The tides; — and then of mortal wars,

And of the life which heroes lead

Before they reach the Elysian place

And rest in the immortal mead; 75
And all the wisdom of his race.

*(The music below ceases, and
Empedocles speaks, accom-
panying himself in a solemn
manner on his harp.)*

Empedocles

The out-spread world to span
A cord the Gods first slung,
And then the soul of man
There, like a mirror, hung, 80
And bade the winds through space impel
the gusty toy.

Hither and thither spins
The wind-borne mirroring soul,
A thousand glimpses wins,
And never sees a whole; 85
Looks once, and drives elsewhere, and
leaves its last employ.

The Gods laugh in their sleeve
To watch man doubt and fear,
Who knows not what to believe
Since he sees nothing clear, 90
And dares stamp nothing false where he
finds nothing sure.

Is this, Pausanias, so?
And can our souls not strive,
But with the winds must go,
And hurry where they drive? 95
Is fate indeed so strong, man's strength
indeed so poor?

I will not judge! that man,
Howbeit, I judge as lost,
Whose mind allows a plan
Which would degrade it most; 100
And he treats doubt the best who tries
to see least ill.

Be not, then, fear's blind slave!
Thou art my friend; to thee,
All knowledge that I have,
All skill I wield, are free. 105
Ask not the latest news of the last miracle,

Ask not what days and nights
In trance Pantheia lay,
But ask how thou such sights
May'st see without dismay; 110
Ask what most helps when known, thou
son of Anchitus!

What? hate, and awe, and shame
Fill thee to see our time;
Thou feelest thy soul's frame
Shaken and out of chime? 115
What? life and chance go hard with thee
too, as with us;

Thy citizens, 'tis said,
Envy thee and oppress,
Thy goodness no men aid,
All strive to make it less; 120
Tyranny, pride, and lust fill Sicily's
abodes;

Heaven is with earth at strife,
Signs make thy soul afraid,
The dead return to life,
Rivers are dried, winds stayed; 125
Scarce can one think in calm, so threaten-
ing are the Gods;

And we feel, day and night,
The burden of ourselves—
Well, then, the wiser wight
In his own bosom delves, 130
And asks what ails him so, and gets what
cure he can.

The sophist sneers: Fool, take
Thy pleasure, right or wrong!
The pious wail: Forsake
A world these sophists throng!— 135
Be neither saint nor sophist-led, but be a
man!

These hundred doctors try
To preach thee to their school.
We have the truth! they cry;
And yet their oracle, 140
Trumpet it as they will, is but the same as
thine.

Once read thy own breast right,
And thou hast done with fears!
Man gets no other light,
Search he a thousand years. 145
Sink in thyself! there ask what ails thee,
at that shrine!

What makes thee struggle and rave?
Why are men ill at ease?—
'Tis that the lot they have
Fails their own will to please; 150
For man would make no murmuring,
were his will obeyed.

And why is it, that still
Man with his lot thus fights?—
'Tis that he makes this *will*
The measure of his *rights*, 155
And believes Nature outraged if his will's
gainsaid.

Couldst thou, Pausanias, learn
How deep a fault is this!
Couldst thou but once discern
Thou hast no *right* to bliss, 160
No title from the Gods to welfare and
repose;

Then thou wouldst look less mazed
Whene'er from bliss debarred,
Nor think the Gods were crazed
When thy own lot went hard. 165
But we are all the same—the fools of
our own woes!

For, from the first faint morn
Of life, the thirst for bliss
Deep in man's heart is born;
And, sceptic as he is, 170
He fails not to judge clear if this be
quenched or no.

Nor is that thirst to blame.
Man errs not that he deems
His welfare his true aim:
He errs because he dreams 175
The world does but exist that welfare to
bestow.

We mortals are no kings
For each of whom to sway
A new-made world up-springs
Meant merely for his play; 180
No, we are strangers here; the world is
from of old.

In vain our pent wills fret,
And would the world subdue.
Limits we did not set
Condition all we do; 185
Born into life we are, and life must be
our mould.

Born into life!—man grows
Forth from his parents' stem,
And blends their bloods, as those
Of theirs are blent in them; 190
So each new man strikes root into a far
fore-time.

Born into life!—we bring
A bias with us here,
And, when here, each new thing
Affects us we come near; 195
To tunes we did not call, our being must
keep chime.

Born into life!—in vain,
Opinions, those or these,
Unaltered to retain
The obstinate mind decrees; 200
Experience, like a sea, soaks all-effacing
in.

Born into life!—who lists
May what is false hold dear,
And for himself make mists
Through which to see less clear; 205
The world is what it is, for all our dust
and din.

Born into life!—'tis we,
And not the world, are new;
Our cry for bliss, our plea,
Others have urged it too— 210
Our wants have all been felt, our errors
made before.

No eye could be too sound
 To observe a world so vast,
 No patience too profound
 To sort what's here amassed; 215
 How man may here best live no care too
 great to explore.

But we — as some rude guest
 Would change, where'er he roam,
 The manners there professed
 To those he brings from home — 220
 We mark not the world's course, but
 would have *it* take *ours*.

The world's course proves the terms
 On which man wins content;
 Reason the proof confirms —
 We spurn it, and invent 225
 A false course for the world, and for our-
 selves, false powers.

Riches we wish to get,
 Yet remain spendthrifts still;
 We would have health, and yet
 Still use our bodies ill; 230
 Bafflers of our own prayers, from youth to
 life's last scenes.

We would have inward peace,
 Yet will not look within;
 We would have misery cease,
 Yet will not cease from sin;
 We want all pleasant ends, but will use no
 harsh means; 235

We do not what we ought,
 What we ought not, we do,
 And lean upon the thought
 That chance will bring us through; 240
 But our own acts, for good or ill, are
 mightier powers.

Yet, even when man forsakes
 All sin, — is just, is pure,
 Abandons all which makes
 His welfare insecure, — 245
 Other existences there are, that clash with
 ours.

Like us, the lightning-fires
 Love to have scope and play;
 The stream, like us, desires
 An unimpeded way; 250
 Like us, the Libyan wind delights to roam
 at large.

Streams will not curb their pride
 The just man not to entomb,
 Nor lightnings go aside
 To leave his virtues room; 255
 Nor is that wind less rough which blows a
 good man's barge.

Nature, with equal mind,
 Sees all her sons at play;
 Sees man control the wind,
 The wind sweep man away; 260
 Allows the proudly-riding and the foun-
 dered bark.

And lastly, though of ours
 No weakness spoil our lot,
 Though the non-human powers
 Of Nature harm us not, 265
 The ill-deeds of other men make often *our*
 life dark.

What were the wise man's plan? —
 Through this sharp, toil-set life,
 To fight as best he can,
 And win what's won by strife. — 270
 But we an easier way to cheat our pains
 have found.

Scratched by a fall, with moans
 As children of weak age
 Lend life to the dumb stones
 Whereon to vent their rage, 275
 And bend their little fists, and rate the
 senseless ground;

So, loath to suffer mute,
 We, peopling the void air,
 Make Gods to whom to impute
 The ills we ought to bear; 280
 With God and Fate to rail at, suffering
 easily.

Yet grant — as sense long missed
 Things that are now perceived,
 And much may still exist
 Which is not yet believed — 285
 Grant that the world were full of Gods
 we cannot see;

All things the world which fill
 Of but one stuff are spun,
 That we who rail are still,
 With what we rail at, one; 290
 One with the o'er-labored Power that
 through the breadth and length

Of earth, and air, and sea,
 In men, and plants, and stones,
 Hath toil perpetually,
 And struggles, pants, and moans; 295
 Fain would do all things well, but some-
 times fails in strength.

And patiently exact
 This universal God
 Alike to any act
 Proceeds at any nod, 300
 And quietly declaims the cursings of him-
 self.

This is not what man hates,
 Yet he can curse but this.
 Harsh Gods and hostile Fates
 Are dreams! this only *is*; 305
 Is everywhere; sustains the wise, the fool-
 ish elf.

Nor only, in the intent
 To attach blame elsewhere,
 Do we at will invent
 Stern Powers who make their care 310
 To embitter human life, malignant Deities;

But, next, we would reverse
 The scheme ourselves have spun,
 And what we made to curse
 We now would lean upon, 315
 And feign kind Gods who perfect what
 man vainly tries.

Look, the world tempts our eye,
 And we would know it all!
 We map the starry sky,
 We mine this earthen ball, 320
 We measure the sea-tides, we number the
 sea-sands;

We scrutinize the dates
 Of long-past human things,
 The bounds of effaced states,
 The lines of deceased kings; 325
 We search out dead men's words, and
 works of dead men's hands;

We shut our eyes, and muse
 How our own minds are made,
 What springs of thought they use,
 How rightened, how betrayed — 330
 And spend our wit to name what most
 employ unnamed.

But still, as we proceed
 The mass swells more and more
 Of volumes yet to read,
 Of secrets yet to explore. 335
 Our hair grows grey, our eyes are dimmed,
 our heat is tamed;

We rest our faculties,
 And thus address the Gods:
 "True science if there is,
 It stays in your abodes; 340
 Man's measures cannot mete the immeas-
 urable All;

"You only can take in
 The world's immense design; —
 Our desperate search was sin,
 Which henceforth we resign, 345
 Sure only that *your* mind sees all things
 which befall!"

Fools! That in man's brief term
 He cannot all things view,
 Affords no ground to affirm
 That there are Gods who do! 350
 Nor does being weary prove that he has
 where to rest!

Again. — Our youthful blood
 Claims rapture as its right;
 The world, a rolling flood
 Of newness and delight, 355
 Draws in the enamoured gazer to its
 shining breast;

Pleasure, to our hot grasp,
 Gives flowers after flowers,
 With passionate warmth we clasp
 Hand after hand in ours; 360
 Nor do we soon perceive how fast our
 youth is spent.

At once our eyes grow clear!
 We see, in blank dismay,
 Year posting after year,
 Sense after sense decay; 365
 Our shivering heart is mined by secret
 discontent;

Yet still, in spite of truth,
 In spite of hopes entombed,
 That longing of our youth
 Burns ever unconsumed, 370
 Still hungrier for delight as delights grow
 more rare.

We pause; we hush our heart,
 And then address the Gods:
 "The world hath failed to impart
 The joy our youth forbodes, 375
 Failed to fill up the void which in our
 breasts we bear.

"Changeful till now, we still
 Looked on to something new;
 Let us, with changeless will,
 Henceforth look on to you, 380
 To find with you the joy we in vain *here*
 require!"

Fools! That so often here
 Happiness mocked our prayer,
 I think, might make us fear
 A like event elsewhere! 385
 Make us, not fly to dreams, but moderate
 desire!

And yet, for those who know
 Themselves, who wisely take
 Their way through life, and bow
 To what they cannot break, 390
 Why should I say that life need yield but
moderate bliss?

Shall we, with temper spoiled,
 Health sapped by living ill,
 And judgment all embroiled
 By sadness and self-will, 395
 Shall *we* judge what for man is not true
 bliss or is?

Is it so small a thing
 To have enjoyed the sun,
 To have lived light in the spring,
 To have loved, to have thought, to have
 done; 400
 To have advanced true friends, and beat
 down baffling foes —

That we must feign a bliss
 Of doubtful future date,
 And, while we dream on this,
 Lose all our present state, 405
 And relegate to worlds yet distant our
 repose?

Not much, I know, you prize
 What pleasures may be had,
 Who look on life with eyes
 Estranged, like mine, and sad; 410
 And yet the village churl feels the truth
 more than you,

Who's loath to leave this life
 Which to him little yields, —
 His hard-tasked sunburnt wife,
 His often-labored fields, 415
 The boors with whom he talked, the coun-
 try spots he knew.

But thou, because thou hearest
 Men scoff at Heaven and Fate,
 Because the Gods thou fearest
 Fail to make blest thy state, 420
 Tremblest, and wilt not dare to trust the
 joys there are.

I say: Fear not! Life still
 Leaves human effort scope.
 But, since life teems with ill,
 Nurse no extravagant hope; 425
 Because thou must not dream, thou need'st
 not then despair!

*(A long pause. At the end of it the
 notes of a harp below are again
 heard, and Callicles sings)*

Callicles

Far, far from here,
 The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
 Among the green Illyrian hills; and there
 The sunshine in the happy glens is fair, 430
 And by the sea, and in the brakes.
 The grass is cool, the sea-side air
 Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
 More virginal and sweet than ours.
 And there, they say, two bright and aged
 snakes, 435
 Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,
 Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-
 shore,
 In breathless quiet, after all their ills;
 Nor do they see their country, nor the
 place
 Where the Sphinx lived among the frown-
 ing hills, 440
 Nor the unhappy palace of their race,
 Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more.

There those two live, far in the Illyrian
 brakes!
 They had stayed long enough to see,
 In Thebes, the billow of calamity, 445
 Over their own dear children rolled,
 Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,
 For years, they sitting helpless in their
 home,
 A grey old man and woman; yet of old
 The Gods had to their marriage come, 450
 And at the banquet all the Muses sang.

Therefore they did not end their days
 In sight of blood; but were rapt, far away,
 To where the west wind plays,

And murmurs of the Adriatic come 455
 To those untrodden mountain-lawns; and
 there
 Placed safely in changed forms, the pair
 Wholly forget their first sad life, and
 home,
 And all that Theban woe, and stray
 For ever through the glens, placid and
 dumb. 460

Empedocles. That was my harp-player
 again! — where is he?

Down by the stream?

Pausanias. Yes, master, in the wood.

Empedocles. He ever loved the Theban
 story well!

But the day wears. Go now, Pausanias,
 For I must be alone. Leave me one
 mule; 466

Take down with thee the rest to Catana.
 And for young Callicles, thank him from
 me;

Tell him I never failed to love his lyre —
 But he must follow me no more tonight.

Pausanias. Thou wilt return tomorrow
 to the city? 471

Empedocles. Either tomorrow or some
 other day,

In the sure revolutions of the world,
 Good friend, I shall revisit Catana.
 I have seen many cities in my time, 475
 Till my eyes ache with the long spec-
 tacle,

And I shall doubtless see them all again;
 Thou know'st me for a wanderer from of
 old.

Meanwhile, stay me not now. Farewell,
 Pausanias!

(He departs on his way up the mountain.)

Pausanias (alone). I dare not urge him
 further: he must go. 480

But he is strangely wrought! — I will
 speed back

And bring Peisianax to him from the city;
 His counsel could once soothe him. But,
 Apollo!

How his brow lightened as the music
 rose!

Callicles must wait here, and play to him!
 I saw him through the chestnuts far be-
 low, 486
 Just since, down at the stream. — Ho,
 Callicles!

(He descends, calling.)

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

(1853)

And the first gray of morning filled the
 east,
 And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
 But all the Tartar camp along the stream
 Was hushed, and still the men were
 plunged in sleep;
 Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
 He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
 But when the gray dawn stole into his
 tent,
 He rose, and clad himself, and girt his
 sword,
 And took his horseman's cloak, and left his
 tent;
 And went abroad into the cold wet fog, 10
 Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's
 tent.
 Through the black Tartar tents he
 passed, which stood
 Clustering like beehives on the low flat
 strand
 Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'er-
 flow
 When the sun melts the snows in high
 Pamere; 15
 Through the black tents he passed, o'er
 that low strand,
 And to a hillock came, a little back
 From the stream's brink — the spot where
 first a boat,
 Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the
 land.
 The men of former times had crowned the
 top 20
 With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and
 now
 The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's
 tent,

A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were
 spread.
 And Sohrab came there, and went in, and
 stood
 Upon the thick piled carpets in the
 tent, 25
 And found the old man sleeping on his bed
 Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his
 arms,
 And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the
 step
 Was dulled; for he slept light, an old
 man's sleep;
 And he rose quickly on one arm, and
 said: — 30
 "Who are thou? for it is not yet clear
 dawn.
 Speak! is there news, or any night
 alarm?"

But Sohrab came to the bedside, and
 said: —
 "Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
 The sun is not yet risen, and the foe 35
 Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
 Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
 For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
 Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
 In Samarcand, before the army marched;
 And I will tell thee what my heart de-
 sires. 41
 Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan
 first
 I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
 I have still served Afrasiab well, and
 shown,
 At my boy's years, the courage of a man. 45
 This too thou know'st, that while I still
 bear on
 The conquering Tartar ensigns through
 the world,
 And beat the Persians back on every field,
 I seek one man, one man, and one alone —
 Rustum, my father; who I hoped should
 greet, 50
 Should one day greet, upon some well-
 fought field,
 His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
 So I long hoped, but him I never find.

Come then, hear now, and grant me what
I ask.

Let the two armies rest today; but I 55
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian
lords

To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall —
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no
kin.

Dim is the rumor of a common fight, 60
Where host meets host, and many names
are sunk;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."

He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the
hand
Of the young man in his, and sighed, and
said:—

"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine! 65
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar
chiefs,

And share the battle's common chance
with us

Who love thee, but must press for ever
first,

In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen? 70
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is
war,

And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's
towns.

But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum—seek him not
through fight! 75

Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!

But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every
fray; 80

But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.

Whether that his own mighty strength at
last

Feels the abhorred approaches of old age,
Or in some quarrel with the Persian
King. 85

There go!—Thou wilt not? Yet my
heart forebodes

Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well,
though lost

To us; fain therefore send thee hence, in
peace

To seek thy father, not seek single
fights 90

In vain;—but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's
son?

Go, I will grant thee what thy heart de-
sires."

So said he, and dropped Sohrab's hand,
and left

His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he
lay; 95

And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He passed, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and
he took

In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin
cap, 100

Black, glossy, curled, the fleece of Kara-
Kul;

And raised the curtain of his tent, and
called

His herald to his side, and went abroad.

The sun by this had risen, and cleared
the fog

From the broad Oxus and the glittering
sands. 105

And from their tents the Tartar horsemen
filed

Into the open plain; so Haman bade —
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled

The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse,
they streamed; 110

As when some gray November morn the
files,

In marching order spread, of long-neck'd
cranes

Stream over Casbin and the southern
slopes

Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
 Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, south-
 ward bound 115
 For the warm Persian sea-board — so they
 streamed.
 The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's
 guard,
 First, with black sheep-skin caps and with
 long spears;
 Large men, large steeds; who from Bok-
 hara come
 And Khiva, and ferment the milk of
 mares. 120
 Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of
 the south,
 The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
 And those from Attruck and the Caspian
 sands;
 Light men and on light steeds, who only
 drink
 The acrid milk of camels, and their
 wells. 125
 And then a swarm of wandering horse,
 who came
 From far, and a more doubtful service
 owned;
 The Tartars of Ferghana, from the
 banks
 Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
 And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder
 hordes 130
 Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern
 waste,
 Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes
 who stray
 Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kir-
 ghizzes,
 Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere;
 These all filed out from camp into the
 plain. 135
 And on the other side the Persians
 formed:—
 First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they
 seemed,
 The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
 The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
 Marshalled battalions bright in burnished
 steel. 140
 But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,

Threading the Tartar squadrons to the
 front,
 And with his staff kept back the foremost
 ranks.
 And when Ferood, who led the Persians,
 saw
 That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars
 back, 145
 He took his spear, and to the front he
 came,
 And checked his ranks, and fixed them
 where they stood.
 And the old Tartar came upon the sand
 Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and
 said:
 "Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars,
 hear! 150
 Let there be truce between the hosts today.
 But choose a champion from the Persian
 lords
 To fight our champion Sohrab, man to
 man."

As, in the country, on a morn in June,
 When the dew glistens on the pearled
 ears, 155
 A shiver runs through the deep corn for
 joy —
 So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa
 said,
 A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons
 ran
 Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they
 loved.

But as a troop of pedlars, from Ca-
 bool, 160
 Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
 That vast sky-neighboring mountain of
 milk snow;
 Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they
 pass
 Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the
 snow,
 Choked by the air, and scarce can they
 themselves 165
 Slake their parched throats with sugared
 mulberries —

In single file they move, and stop their
breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'er-
hanging snows —
So the pale Persians held their breath with
fear.

And to Ferood his brother chiefs came
up 170
To counsel: Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King;
These came and counselled, and then
Gudurz said: —
"Ferood, shame bids us take their chal-
lenge up, 175
Yet champion have we none to match this
youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's
heart;
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear 180
The Tartar challenge, and this young
man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their
challenge up."

So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and
cried: —
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast
said! 185
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."

He spake: and Peran-Wisa turned, and
strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his
tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz
ran,
And crossed the camp which lay behind,
and reached, 190
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's
tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering
gay,

Just pitched; the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camped
around.
And Gudurz entered Rustum's tent, and
found 195
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but
still
The table stood before him, charged with
food —
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum
sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist 200
And played with it; but Gudurz came and
stood
Before him; and he looked, and saw him
stand,
And with a cry sprang up and dropped the
bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and
said: —
"Welcome! these eyes could see no better
sight. 205
What news? but sit down first, and eat
and drink."

But Gudurz stood in the tent door, and
said: —
"Not now! a time will come to eat and
drink,
But not today; today has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at
gaze; 210
For from the Tartars is a challenge
brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion — and thou
know'st his name —
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young
man's! 215
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's
heart;
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to
thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we
lose!"

He spoke; but Rustum answered with a smile:— 220

"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older; if the young are weak, the
King

Errs strangely; for the King, for Kai
Khosroo,

Himself is young, and honors younger
men,

And lets the aged moulder to their
graves. 225

Rustum he loves no more, but loves the
young—

The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts,
not I.

For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's
fame?

For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I
have— 230

A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-haired Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his
herds,

And he has none to guard his weak old
age. 235

There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak
old man,

And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's
fame,

And leave to death the hosts of thankless
kings, 240

And with these slaughterous hands draw
sword no more."

He spoke and smiled; and Gudurz made
reply:—

"What then, O Rustum, will men say to
this,

When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and
seeks

Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he
seeks, 245

Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men
should say:

*Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his
fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."*

And greatly moved, then Rustum made
reply:—

"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such
words? 250

Thou knowest better words than this to
say.

What is one more, one less, obscure or
famed,

Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?

Are not they mortal, am not I myself?

But who for men of nought would do
great deeds? 255

Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards
his fame!

But I will fight unknown, and in plain
arms;

Let not men say of Rustum, he was
matched

In single fight with any mortal man."

He spoke, and frowned; and Gudurz
turned, and ran 260

Back quickly through the camp in fear and
joy—

Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum
came.

But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and
called

His followers in, and bade them bring his
arms,

And clad himself in steel; the arms he
chose 265

Were plain, and on his shield was no
device,

Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,

And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume

Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair
plume.

So armed, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his
horse, 270

Followed him like a faithful hound at
heel—

Ruksh, whose renown was noised through
all the earth,

The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
 Did in Bokhara by the river find
 A colt beneath its dam, and drove him
 home, 275
 And reared him; a bright bay, with lofty
 crest,
 Dight with a saddle-cloth of brodered
 green
 Crusted with gold, and on the ground were
 worked
 All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunt-
 ers know.
 So followed, Rustum left his tents, and
 crossed 280
 The camp, and to the Persian host ap-
 peared.
 And all the Persians knew him, and with
 shouts
 Hailed; but the Tartars knew not who he
 was.
 And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
 Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on
 shore, 285
 By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
 Plunging all day in the blue waves, at
 night,
 Having made up his tale of precious
 pearls,
 Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands —
 So dear to the pale Persians Rustum
 came. 290

And Rustum to the Persian front ad-
 vanced,
 And Sohrab armed in Haman's tent, and
 came.
 And as afield the reapers cut a swath
 Down through the middle of a rich man's
 corn,
 And on each side are squares of standing
 corn, 295
 And in the midst a stubble, short and
 bare —
 So on each side were squares of men, with
 spears
 Bristling, and in the midst, the open
 sand.
 And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast

His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and
 saw 300
 Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he
 came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's
 morn,
 Eyes through her silken curtains the poor
 drudge
 Who with numb blackened fingers makes
 her fire —
 At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's
 morn, 305
 When the frost flowers the whitened win-
 dow-panes —
 And wonders how she lives, and what the
 thoughts
 Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum
 eyed
 The unknown adventurous youth, who
 from afar
 Came seeking Rustum, and defying
 forth 310
 All the most valiant chiefs; long he
 perused
 His spirited air, and wondered who he
 was.
 For very young he seemed, tenderly
 reared;
 Like some young cypress, tall, and dark,
 and straight,
 Which in a queen's secluded garden
 throws 315
 Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
 By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's
 sound —
 So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly reared.
 And a deep pity entered Rustum's soul
 As he beheld him coming; and he
 stood, 320
 And beckoned to him with his hand, and
 said: —
 "O thou young man, the air of Heaven
 is soft,
 And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is
 cold!
 Heaven's air is better than the cold dead
 grave.
 Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron, 325

And tried; and I have stood on many a field
 Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe —
 Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
 O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
 Be governed! quit the Tartar host, and come 330
 To Iran, and be as my son to me,
 And fight beneath my banner till I die!
 There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."

So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
 The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw 335
 His giant figure planted on the sand,
 Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
 Hath builded on the waste in former years
 Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
 Streaked with its first gray hairs — hope
 filled his soul, 340
 And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
 And clasped his hand within his own, and said: —
 "O, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
 Art thou not Rustum? speak! are thou not he?"

But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth, 345
 And turned away, and spake to his own soul: —
 "Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
 False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
 For if I now confess this thing he asks,
 And hide it not, but say: *Rustum is here!* 350
 He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
 But he will find some pretext not to fight,
 And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,

A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
 And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall, 355
 In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:
 'I challenged once, when the two armies camped
 Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
 To cope with me in single fight; but they
 Shrank, only Rustum dared; then he
 and I 360
 Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
 So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
 Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."

And then he turned, and sternly spake aloud: —
 "Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus 365
 Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast called
 By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!
 Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
 Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
 For well I know that, did great Rustum stand 370
 Before thy face this day, and were revealed,
 There would be then no talk of fighting more.
 But being what I am, I tell thee this —
 Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
 Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield, 375
 Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
 Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
 Oxus in summer wash them all away."

He spoke; and Sohrab answered, on his feet: —
 "Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so! 380

I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
 Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum
 stand
 Here on this field, there were no fighting
 then.
 But Rustum is far hence, and we stand
 here.
 Begin! thou art more vast, more dread
 than I, 385
 And thou art proved, I know, and I am
 young —
 But yet success sways with the breath of
 Heaven.
 And though thou thinkest that thou know-
 est sure
 Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely
 know.
 For we are all, like swimmers in the
 sea, 390
 Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
 Which hangs uncertain to which side to
 fall.
 And whether it will heave us up to land,
 Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
 Back out to sea, to the deep waves of
 death, 395
 We know not, and no search will make us
 know;
 Only the event will teach us in its hour."

He spoke, and Rustum answered not,
 but hurled
 His spear; down from the shoulder, down
 it came,
 As on some partridge in the corn a
 hawk, 400
 That long has towered in the airy clouds,
 Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it
 come,
 And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the
 spear
 Hissed, and went quivering down into the
 sand,
 Which it sent flying wide; — then Sohrab
 threw 405
 In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield;
 sharp rang,
 The iron plates rang sharp, but turned the
 spear.

And Rustum seized his club, which none
 but he
 Could wield; an unlopped trunk it was,
 and huge,
 Still rough — like those which men in tree-
 less plains 410
 To build them boats fish from the flooded
 rivers,
 Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
 By their dark springs, the wind in winter-
 time
 Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
 And strewn the channels with torn boughs
 — so huge 415
 The club which Rustum lifted now, and
 struck
 One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang
 aside,
 Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club
 came
 Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rus-
 tum's hand.
 And Rustum followed his own blow, and
 fell 420
 To his knees, and with his fingers clutched
 the sand;
 And now might Sohrab have unsheathed
 his sword,
 And pierced the mighty Rustum while he
 lay
 Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with
 sand;
 But he looked on, and smiled, nor bared
 his sword, 425
 But courteously drew back, and spoke, and
 said: —
 "Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine
 will float
 Upon the summer-floods, and not my
 bones.
 But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth
 am I;
 No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my
 soul. 430
 Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum; be it
 so!
 Who art thou then, that canst so touch my
 soul?
 Boy as I am, I have seen battles too —

Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,

And heard their hollow roar of dying men; 435

But never was my heart thus touched before.

Are they from Heaven, these softening of the heart?

O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!

Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,

And make a truce, and sit upon this sand, 440

And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,

And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.

There are enough foes in the Persian host, Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;

Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou 445

Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!

But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"

He ceased, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,

And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club

He left to lie, but had regained his spear, 450

Whose fiery point now in his mailed right-hand

Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,

The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soiled His stately crest, and dimmed his glittering arms.

His breast heaved, his lips foamed, and twice his voice 455

Was choked with rage; at last these words broke way:—

"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!

Curled minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!

Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!

Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now 460 With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;

But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance Of battle, and with me, who make no play Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand. Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine! 465

Remember all thy valor; try thy feints And cunning! all the pity I had is gone; Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts

With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."

He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts, 470

And he too drew his sword; at once they rushed

Together, as two eagles on one prey Come rushing down together from the clouds,

One from the east, one from the west; their shields

Dashed with a clang together, and a din 475

Rose, such as that the sinewy wood-cutters

Make often in the forest's heart at morn, Of hewing axes, crashing trees—such blows

Rustum and Sohrab on each other hailed. And you would say that sun and stars took part 480

In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud Grew suddenly in Heaven, and darked the sun

Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,

And in a sandy whirlwind wrapped the pair. 485

In gloom the twain were wrapped, and they alone;

For both the on-looking hosts on either hand

Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was
 pure,
 And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream,
 But in the gloom they fought, with blood-
 shot eyes 490
 And laboring breath; first Rustum struck
 the shield
 Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-
 spiked spear
 Rent the tough plates, but failed to reach
 the skin,
 And Rustum plucked it back with angry
 groan.
 Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rus-
 tum's helm, 495
 Nor clove its steel quite through; but all
 the crest
 He shore away, and that proud horsehair
 plume,
 Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
 And Rustum bowed his head; but then the
 gloom
 Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the
 air, 500
 And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh,
 the horse,
 Who stood at hand, uttered a dreadful
 cry;—
 No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
 Of some pained desert-lion, who all day
 Hath trailed the hunter's javelin in his
 side, 505
 And comes at night to die upon the sand.
 The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked
 for fear,
 And Oxus curdled as it crossed his
 stream.
 But Sohrab heard, and quailed not, but
 rushed on,
 And struck again; and again Rustum
 bowed 510
 His head; but this time all the blade, like
 glass,
 Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
 And in the hand the hilt remained alone.
 Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful
 eyes
 Glared, and he shook on high his menacing
 spear,

And shouted: *Rustum!*—Sohrab heard
 that shout, 515
 And shrank amazed; back he recoiled one
 step,
 And scanned with blinking eyes the ad-
 vancing form;
 And then he stood bewildered; and he
 dropped
 His covering shield, and the spear pierced
 his side. 520
 He reeled, and staggering back, sank to the
 ground,
 And then the gloom dispersed, and the
 wind fell,
 And the bright sun broke forth, and
 melted all
 The cloud; and the two armies saw the
 pair—
 Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his
 feet, 525
 And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

 Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum
 began:—
 "Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to
 kill
 A Persian lord this day, and strip his
 corpse,
 And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent. 530
 Or else that the great Rustum would come
 down
 Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would
 move
 His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
 And then that all the Tartar host would
 praise
 Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy
 fame, 535
 To glad thy father in his weak old age.
 Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown
 man!
 Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
 Than to thy friends, and to thy father
 old."

 And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab re-
 plied:— 540
 "Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is
 vain.

Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful
man!

No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I matched with ten such men as
thee,

And I were that which till today I was, 545
They should be lying here, I standing
there.

But that belovèd name unnerved my
arm—

That name, and something, I confess, in
thee,

Which troubles all my heart, and made my
shield

Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarmed
foe. 550

And now thou boastest, and insult'st my
fate.

But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to
hear

The mighty Rustum shall avenge my
death!

My father, whom I seek through all the
world,

He shall avenge my death, and punish
thee!" 555

As when some hunter in the spring hath
found

A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,

And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And followed her to find her where she
fell 560

Far off;—anon her mate comes winging
back

From hunting, and a great way off describes
His huddling young left sole; at that, he
checks 566

His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but
she 566

Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers—never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it; 570
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by—

As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his
loss,

So Rustum knew not his own loss, but
stood

Over his dying son, and knew him not. 575

But, with a cold incredulous voice, he
said:—

"What prate is this of fathers and re-
venge?

The mighty Rustum never had a son."

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab re-
plied:—

"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I. 580
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries
long,

Somewhere, I know not where, but far
from here;

And pierce him like a stab, and make him
leap

To arms, and cry for vengeance upon
thee. 585

Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that ven-
geance be?

Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,

My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells 590
With that old king, her father, who grows
gray

With age, and rules over the valiant
Koords.

Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is
done. 595

But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman
learn

That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no
more,

But that in battle with a nameless foe, 600
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."

He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept
aloud,

Thinking of her he left, and his own death.

He spoke; but Rustum listened, plunged in thought.

Nor did he yet believe it was his son 605

Who spoke, although he called back names he knew;

For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—

So that sad mother sent him word, for fear 610

Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms;

And so he deemed that either Sohrab took,

By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;

Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.

So deemed he; yet he listened, plunged in thought; 615

And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon; tears gathered in his eyes;

For he remembered his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn, 620

The shepherd from his mountain-lodge describes

A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds—so Rustum saw

His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;

And that old king, her father, who loved well 625

His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child

With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,

They three, in that long-distant summer-time—

The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt

And hound, and morn on those delightful hills 630

In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,

Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe

Of an unskilful gardener has been cut, 635
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,

And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,

On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,

Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said:— 640

“O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved.

Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum's son.

For Rustum had no son; one child he had— 645

But one—a girl; who with her mother now

Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—

Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.”

But Sohrab answered him in wrath; for now

The anguish of the deep-fixed spear grew fierce, 650

And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die—

But first he would convince his stubborn foe;

And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—
“Man, who art thou who dost deny my words? 655

Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.

I tell thee, pricked upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,

That she might prick it on the babe she bore.” 660

He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees tottered, and he smote his hand

Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corslet clanked aloud;
And to his heart he pressed the other hand, 665
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—

"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!

If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed

His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm, 670

And showed a sign in faint vermilion points

Pricked; as a cunning workman, in Pekin, Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,

An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,

And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp 675

Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—

So delicately pricked the sign appeared
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.

It was that griffin, which of old reared Zal,

Rustum's great father, whom they left to die, 680

A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks;

Him that kind creature found, and reared, and loved—

Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.

And Sohrab bared that image on his arm, And himself scanned it long with mournful eyes, 685

And then he touched it with his hand and said:—

"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"

He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood

Speechless; and then he uttered one sharp cry: 690

O boy—thy father!—and his voice choked there.

And then a dark cloud passed before his eyes,

And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.

But Sohrab crawled to where he lay, and cast

His arms about his neck, and kissed his lips, 695

And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,

Trying to call him back to life; and life Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,

And they stood wide with horror; and he seized

In both his hands the dust which lay around, 700

And threw it on his head, and smirched his hair,—

His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;

And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,

And his sobs choked him; and he clutched his sword,

To draw it, and for ever let life out. 705

But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,

And with a soothing voice he spake, and said:—

"Father, forbear! for I but meet today
The doom which at my birth was written down

In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand. 710

Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,

When first I saw thee; and thy heart
spoke too,
I know it! but fate trod those promptings
down

Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurled me on my father's
spear. 715

But let us speak no more of this! I find
My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my
cheeks,

And wash them with thy tears, and say:
My son! 720

Quick! quick! for numbered are my sands
of life,

And swift; for like the lightning to this
field

I came, and like the wind I go away —
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in Heaven that this should
be."

So said he, and his voice released the
heart

Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he
cast

His arms round his son's neck, and wept
aloud,

And kissed him. And awe fell on both
the hosts,

When they saw Rustum's grief; and
Ruksh, the horse, 730

With his head bowing to the ground and
mane

Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute
woe

First to the one, then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their
grief

Might mean; and from his dark, compas-
sionate eyes, 735

The big warm tears rolled down, and
caked the sand.

But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and
said: —

"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh,
thy feet

Should first have rotted on their nimble
joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this
field!" 740

But Sohrab looked upon the horse and
said: —

"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past
days,

My mother told me of thee, thou brave
steed,

My terrible father's terrible horse! and
said,

That I should one day find thy lord and
thee. 745

Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuffed the breezes of my father's
home,

And thou hast trod the sands of Seis-
tan, 750

And seen the River of Helmund, and the
Lake

Of Zirrah; and the agèd Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given
thee food,

Corn in a golden platter soaked with
wine,

And said; *O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!*
— but I 755

Have never known my grandsire's fur-
rowed face,

Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Hel-
mund stream;

But lodged among my father's foes, and
seen

Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand, 760
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,

And the black Toorkmun tents; and only
drunk

The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohib, and where the Kalmuks feed their
sheep,

The northern Sir; and this great Oxus
stream, 765

The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewailed:—

"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my
head!" 770

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:—

"Desire not that, my father! thou must live.

For some are born to do great deeds, and live,

As some are born to be obscured, and die.

Do thou the deeds I die too young to do, 775

And reap a second glory in thine age;
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men

Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!

Let me entreat for them; what have they done? 780

They followed me, my hope, my fame, my star.

Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.

But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,

But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me, 785

Thou, and the snow-haired Zal, and all thy friends.

And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,

And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all.

That so the passing horseman on the waste 790

May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:

Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,

Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!

And I be not forgotten in my grave."

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:— 795

"Fear not, as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,

So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,

And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee, 800

With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends,

And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,

And men shall not forget thee in thy grave. 805

And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!

Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
What should I do with slaying any more?

For would that all that I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest
foes, 810

And they who were called champions in their time,

And through whose death I won that fame I have—

And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,

So thou mightest live too, my son, my son! 815

Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke
of thine,

Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;

And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan; 820

And Zal might weep above my grave,
not thine;

And say: *O son I weep thee not too sore,
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!*

But now in blood and battles was my youth,

And full of blood and battles is my age, 825
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—
 "A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
 But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
 Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day, 830
 When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
 Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
 Returning home over the salt blue sea,
 From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face,
 and said:— 835
 "Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
 Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him,
 and took
 The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
 His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood 840
 Came welling from the open gash, and life
 Flowed with the stream: all down his cold white side
 The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soiled,
 Like the soiled tissue of white violets
 Left, freshly gathered, on the native bank, 845
 By children whom their nurses call with haste
 Indoors from the sun's eye; his head drooped low,
 His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—
 White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
 Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame, 850
 Convulsed him back to life, he opened them,
 And fixed them feebly on his father's face;

Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs,
 Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
 Regretting the warm mansion which it left, 855
 And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
 And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
 Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
 As those black granite pillars, once high-reared 860
 By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
 His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
 Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
 So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.

And night came down over the solemn waste, 865
 And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
 And darkened all; and a cold fog, with night,
 Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
 As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
 Began to twinkle through the fog; for now 870
 Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
 The Persians took it on the open sands
 Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;
 And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on, 875
 Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
 Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
 Rejoicing, through the hushed Chorasmian waste,
 Under the solitary moon;—he flowed
 Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè, 880
 Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands began

To hem his watery march, and dam his
streams,
And split his currents; that for many a
league
The shorn and parcelled Oxus strains
along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy
isles — 885
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foiled circuitous wanderer — till at last
The longed-for dash of waves is heard,
and wide
His luminous home of waters opens,
bright 890
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-
bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

(1853)

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the
hill:
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their
throats,
Nor the cropped herbage shoot another
head. 5
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to
rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes
seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-
blanched green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the
quest! 10
Here, where the reaper was at work of
late —
In this high field's dark corner, where he
leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen
cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the
sheaves,

Then here, at noon, comes back his
stores to use — 15
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is
borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the
corn —
All the live murmur of a summer's day. 20
Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-
reaped field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I
be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet pop-
pies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing
stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils
creep; 25
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their per-
fumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am
laid,
And bower me from the August sun
with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's
towers. 30
And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's
book —
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive
brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's
door, 35
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-
lore,
And roamed the world with that wild
brotherhood,
And came, as most men deemed, to little
good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no
more. 40

But once, years after, in the country lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he
knew,

Met him, and of his way of life en-
quired;

Whereat he answered, that the gipsy-
crew,

His mates, had arts to rule as they de-
sired 45

The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts
they will.

"And I," he said, "the secret of their
art,

When fully learned, will to the world
impart;

But it needs heaven-sent moments for this
skill." 50

This said, he left them, and returned no
more. —

But rumors hung about the countryside

That the lost Scholar long was seen to
stray,

Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-
tied,

In hat of antique shape, and cloak of
gray, 55

The same the gipsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in
spring;

At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire
moors,

On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-
froked boors

Had found him seated at their entering. 60

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would
fly.

And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on
thy trace;

And boys who in lone wheatfields scare
the rooks

I ask if thou hast passed their quiet
place; 65

Or in my boat I lie

Moored to the cool bank in the summer-
heats,

'Mid wide grass meadows which the
sunshine fills,

And watch the warm, green-muffled
Cummer hills,

And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy
retreats. 70

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired
ground!

Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have
met

Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock-
hithe,

Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers
wet, 75

As the punt's rope chops round;

And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of
flowers

Plucked in shy fields and distant Wych-
wood bowers,

And thine eyes resting on the moonlit
stream. 80

And then they land, and thou art seen
no more! —

Maidens, who from the distant hamlets
come

To dance around the Fyfield elm in
May,

Oft through the darkening fields have seen
thee roam,

Or cross a stile into the public way. 85

Oft thou hast given them store

Of flowers — the frail-leaved, white ane-
mone,

Dark bluebells drenched with dews of
summer eves,

And purple orchises with spotted
leaves —

But none hath words she can report of
thee. 90

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-
time's here

In June, and many a scythe in sunshine
flames,

Men who through those wide fields of
breezy grass
Where black-winged swallows haunt the
glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandoned lasher
pass, 95

Have often passed thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure
spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted
air —

But, when they came from bathing, thou
wast gone! 100

At some lone homestead in the Cumner
hills,
Where at her open door the housewife
darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a
gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes
and late 105

For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding
kine;
And marked thee, when the stars come
out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow
away. 110

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley
Wood —
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged
way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush
you see
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of
gray,
Above the forest-ground called Thes-
saly — 115

The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears
at all;
So often has he known thee past him
stray,

Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered
spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven
to fall. 120

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-
travellers go,

Have I not passed thee on the wooden
bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the
snow,

Thy face toward Hinksey and its wintry
ridge? 125

And thou hast climbed the hill,
And gained the white brow of the Cum-
ner range;

Turned once to watch, while thick the
snowflakes fall,

The line of festal light in Christ-Church
hall —

Then sought thy straw in some seques-
tered range. 130

But what — I dream! Two hundred years
are flown

Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale in-
scribe

That thou wert wandered from the stu-
dious walls

To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-
tribe; 135

And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard
laid —

Some country-nook, where o'er thy un-
known grave

Tall grasses and white flowering nettles
wave,

Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's
shade. 140

— No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of
hours!

For what wears out the life of mortal
men?

'Tis that from change to change their
being rolls;

'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
 Exhaust the energy of strongest souls 145
 And numb the elastic powers.
 Till having used our nerves with bliss
 and teen,
 And tired upon a thousand schemes our
 wit,
 To the just-pausing Genius we remit
 Our worn-out life, and are—what we
 have been. 150

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou
 perish, so?

Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one*
 desire;

Else wert thou long since numbered with
 the dead!

Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy
 fire!

The generations of thy peers are fled, 155

And we ourselves shall go;

But thou possessest an immortal lot,

And we imagine thee exempt from age
 And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's
 page,

Because thou hadst—what we, alas! have
 not. 160

For early didst thou leave the world, with
 powers

Fresh, undiverted to the world without,

Firm to their mark, not spent on other
 things;

Free from the sick fatigue, the languid
 doubt,

Which much to have tried, in much
 been baffled, brings. 165

O life unlike to ours!

Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,

Of whom each strives, nor knows for
 what he strives,

And each half lives a hundred different
 lives;

Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in
 hope. 170

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven!
 and we,

Light half-believers of our casual creeds,

Who never deeply felt, nor clearly
 willed,

Whose insight never has borne fruit in
 deeds,

Whose vague resolves never have been
 fulfilled; 175

For whom each year we see

Breeds new beginnings, disappointments
 new;

Who hesitate and falter life away,

And lose tomorrow the ground won to-
 day—

Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too? 180

Yes, we await it!—but it still delays,

And then we suffer! and amongst us one,

Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly

His seat upon the intellectual throne;

And all his store of sad experience
 he 185

Lays bare of wretched days;

Tells us his misery's birth and growth and
 signs,

And how the dying spark of hope was fed,

And how the breast was soothed, and how
 the head,

And all his hourly varied anodynes. 190

This for our wisest! And we others pine,
 And wish the long unhappy dream would
 end,

And waive all claim to bliss, and try
 to bear;

With close-lipped patience for our only
 friend,

Sad patience, too near neighbor to
 despair— 195

But none has hope like thine!

Thou through the fields and through the
 woods dost stray,

Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,

Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,

And every doubt long blown by time
 away. 200

O born in days when wits were fresh and
 clear,

And life ran gaily as the sparkling
 Thames;

Before the strange disease of modern
life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts,
was rife — 205

Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering
wood!

Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in
Hades turn,
Wave us away and keep thy solitude! 210

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free onward impulse brushing
through,
By night, the silvered branches of the
glade —

Far on the forest-skirts, where none
pursue, 215
On some mild pastoral slope

Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted
ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightin-
gales! 220

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental
strife,

Which, though it gives no bliss, yet
spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own
fair life,

Like us distracted, and like us un-
blest. 225

Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy
powers,

And thy clear aims be cross and shifting
made;

And then thy glad perennial youth would
fade,
Fade and grow old at last, and die like
ours. 230

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and
smiles!

— As some grave Tyrian trader, from the
sea,

Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing
brow 235

Among the Ægæan Isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian
wine,

Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steeped
in brine —
And knew the intruders on his ancient
home, 240

The young light-hearted masters of the
waves —

And snatched his rudder, and shook out
more sail;

And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the Blue Midland waters with the
gale,

Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily, 245
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent
sails

There, where down cloudy cliffs,
through sheets of foam,

Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded
bales. 250

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

(1855)

Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused
With rain, where thick the crocus blows,
Past the dark forges long disused,
The mule-track from Saint Laurent goes.
The bridge is crossed, and slow we ride, 5
Through forest, up the mountain-side.

The autumnal evening darkens round,
The wind is up, and drives the rain;
While, hark! far down, with strangled
sound

Doth the Dead Guier's stream com-
plain, 10
Where that wet smoke, among the woods,
Over his boiling cauldron broods.

Swift rush the spectral vapors white
Past limestone scars with ragged pines,
Showing — then blotting from our
sight! — 15
Halt — through the cloud-drift something
shines!
High in the valley, wet and drear,
The huts of Courrierie appear.

Strike leftward! cries our guide; and
higher
Mounts up the stony forest-way. 20
At last the encircling trees retire;
Look! through the showery twilight gray
What pointed roofs are these advance? —
A palace of the Kings of France?

Approach, for what we seek is here! 25
Alight, and sparely sup, and wait
For rest in this outbuilding near;
Then cross the sward and reach that gate.
Knock; pass the wicket! Thou art come
To the Carthusians' world-famed home. 30

The silent courts, where night and day
Into their stone-carved basins cold
The splashing icy fountains play —
The humid corridors behold!
Where, ghostlike in the deepening night 35
Cowed forms brush by in gleaming white.

The chapel, where no organ's peal
Invests the stern and naked prayer —
With penitential cries they kneel
And wrestle; rising then, with bare 40
And white uplifted faces stand,
Passing the Host from hand to hand;

Each takes, and then his visage wan
Is buried in his cowl once more.
The cells! — the suffering Son of Man 45
Upon the wall — the knee-worn floor —
And where they sleep, that wooden bed,
Which shall their coffin be, when dead!

The library, where tract and tome
Not to feed priestly pride are there, 50
To hymn the conquering march of Rome,
Nor yet to amuse, as ours are!
They paint of souls the inner strife,
Their drops of blood, their death in life.

The garden, overgrown — yet mild, 55
See, fragrant herbs are flowering there!
Strong children of the Alpine wild
Whose culture is the brethren's care;
Of human tasks their only one,
And cheerful works beneath the sun. 60

Those halls, too, destined to contain
Each its own pilgrim-host of old,
From England, Germany, or Spain —
All are before me! I behold
The House, the Brotherhood austere! 65
— And what am I, that I am here?

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire,
Showed me the high, white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze, and there aspire. 70
Even now their whispers pierce the gloom;
What dost thou in this living tomb?

Forgive me, masters of the mind!
At whose behest I long ago
So much unlearned, so much resigned — 75
I come not here to be your foe!
I seek these anchorites, not in ruth,
To curse and to deny your truth;

Not as their friend, or child, I speak!
But as, on some far northern strand, 80
Thinking of his own Gods, a Greek
In pity and mournful awe might stand
Before some fallen runic stone —
For both were faiths, and both are gone.

Wandering between two worlds, one
dead, 85
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride —
I come to shed them at their side. 90

Oh, hide me in your gloom profound,
 Ye solemn seats of holy pain!
 Take me, cowed forms, and fence me
 round
 Till I possess my soul again;
 Till free my thoughts before me roll, 95
 Not chafed by hourly false control!

For the world cries your faith is now
 But a dead time's exploded dream;
 My melancholy, sciolists say,
 Is a passed mode, an outworn theme — 100
 As if the world had ever had
 A faith, or sciolists been sad!

Ah, if it *be* passed, take away,
 At least, the restlessness, the pain;
 Be man henceforth no more a prey 105
 To these out-dated stings again!
 The nobleness of grief is gone —
 Ah, leave us not the fret alone!

But — if you cannot give us ease —
 Last of the race of them who grieve 110
 Here leave us to die out with these
 Last of the people who believe!
 Silent, while years engrave the brow;
 Silent — the best are silent now.

Achilles ponders in his tent, 115
 The kings of modern thought are dumb;
 Silent they are, though not content,
 And wait to see the future come.
 They have the grief men had of yore,
 But they contend and cry no more. 120

Our fathers watered with their tears
 This sea of time whereon we sail;
 Their voices were in all men's ears
 Who passed within their puissant hail.
 Still the same ocean round us raves, 125
 But we stand mute, and watch the waves.

For what availed it, all the noise
 And outcry of the former men? —
 Say, have their sons achieved more joys,
 Say, is life lighter now than then? 130
 The sufferers died, they left their pain —
 The pangs which tortured them remain.

What helps it now, that Byron bore,
 With haughty scorn which mocked the
 smart,
 Through Europe to the Ætolian shore 135
 The pageant of his bleeding heart?
 That thousands counted every groan,
 And Europe made his woe her own?

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze
 Carried thy lovely wail away, 140
 Musical through Italian trees
 Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?
 Inheritors of thy distress
 Have restless hearts one throb the less?

Or are we easier, to have read, 145
 O Obermann! the sad, stern page,
 Which tells us how thou hiddest thy head
 From the fierce tempest of thine age
 In the lone brakes of Fontainebleau,
 Or chalets near the Alpine snow? 150

Ye slumber in your silent grave! —
 The world, which for an idle day
 Grace to your mood of sadness gave,
 Long since hath flung her weeds away.
 The eternal trifler breaks your spell; 155
 But we — we learned your lore too well!

Years hence, perhaps, may dawn an age,
 More fortunate, alas! than we,
 Which without hardness will be sage,
 And gay without frivolity. 160
 Sons of the world, oh, speed those years;
 But, while we wait, allow our tears!

Allow them! We admire with awe
 The exulting thunder of your race;
 You give the universe your law, 165
 You triumph over time and space!
 Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
 We laud them, but they are not ours.

We are like children reared in shade
 Beneath some old-world abbey wall, 170
 Forgotten in a forest-glade,

And secret from the eyes of all.
Deep, deep the greenwood round them
waves,
Their abbey, and its close of graves!

But, where the road runs near the
stream, 175
Oft through the trees they catch a glance
Of passing troops in the sun's beam—
Pennon, and plume, and flashing lance!
Forth to the world those soldiers fare,
To life, to cities, and to war! 180

And through the wood, another way,
Faint bugle-notes from far are borne,
Where hunters gather, staghounds bay,
Round some fair forest-lodge at morn.
Gay dames are there, in sylvan green; 185
Laughter and cries—those notes be-
tween!

The banners flashing through the trees
Make their blood dance and chain their
eyes;
That bugle-music on the breeze
Arrests them with a charmed surprise. 190
Banner by turns and bugle woo:
Ye shy recluses, follow too!

O children, what do ye reply?—
"Action and pleasure, will ye roam
Through these secluded dells to cry 195
And call us?—but too late ye come!
Too late for us your call ye blow,
Whose bent was taken long ago.

"Long since we pace this shadowed nave;
We watch those yellow tapers shine, 200
Emblems of hope over the grave,
In the high altar's depth divine;
The organ carries to our ear
Its accents of another sphere.

"Fenced early in this cloistral round 205
Of reverie, of shade, of prayer,
How should we grow in other ground?
How can we flower in foreign air?
—Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease;
And leave our desert to its peace!" 210

AUSTERITY OF POETRY

(1867)

That son of Italy who tried to blow,
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred
song,
In his light youth amid a festal throng
Sate with his bride to see a public show.
Fair was the bride, and on her front did
glow 5
Youth like a star; and what to youth
belong—
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation
strong.
A prop gave way! crash fell a platform!
lo,
'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death,
she lay!
Shuddering, they drew her garments off—
and found 10
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth,
white skin.
Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse!
young, gay,
Radiant, adorned outside; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within.

WORLDLY PLACE

(1867)

Even in a palace, life may be led well!
So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,
Marcus Aurelius. But the stifling den
Of common life, where, crowded up pell-
mell,
Our freedom for a little bread we sell, 5
And drudge under some foolish master's
ken
Who rates us if we peer outside our pen—
Matched with a palace, is not this a hell?
Even in a palace! On his truth sincere,
Who spoke these words, no shadow ever
came; 10
And when my ill-schooled spirit is aflame
Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,
I'll stop, and say: "There were no succor
here!
The aids to noble life are all within."

WEST LONDON

(1867)

Crouched on the pavement, close by Belgrave Square,
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.

A babe was in her arms, and at her side
A girl; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.

Some laboring men, whose work lay somewhere there, 5
Passed opposite; she touched her girl, who hid

Across, and begged, and came back satisfied.

The rich she had let pass with frozen stare.

Thought I: "Above her state this spirit towers;

She will not ask of aliens, but of friends, 10
Of sharers in a common human fate.

She turns from that cold succor, which attends

The unknown little from the unknowing great,

And points us to a better time than ours."

EAST LONDON

(1867)

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead

Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,

And the pale weaver, through his windows seen

In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said: 5

"Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?" —

"Bravely!" said he; "for I of late have been

Much cheered with thoughts of Christ,
the living bread."

O human soul! as long as thou canst 10
Set up a mark of everlasting light,

Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam —

Not with lost toil thou laborest through the night!

Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

THE BETTER PART

(1867)

Long fed on boundless hopes, O race of man,

How angrily thou spurn'st all simpler fare!

"Christ," some one says, "was human as we are;

No judge eyes us from Heaven, our sin to scan;

We live no more, when we have done our span." 5

"Well, then, for Christ," thou answerest, "who can care?

From sin, which Heaven records not, why forbear?

Live we like brutes our life without a plan!"

So answerest thou; but why not rather say:

"Hath man no second life? — *Pitch this one high!*" 10

Sits there no judge in Heaven, our sin to see? —

More strictly, then, the inward judge obey!

Was Christ a man like us? *Ah! let us try
If we then, too, can be such men as he!"*

IMMORTALITY

(1867)

Foiled by our fellow-men, depressed, outworn,

We leave the brutal world to take its way,

And, *Patience! in another life*, we say,

The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne.

And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn 5

The world's poor, routed leavings? or will
they,
Who failed under the heat of this life's
day,
Support the fervors of the heavenly morn?
No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun; 10
And he who flagged not in the earthly
strife,
From strength to strength advancing—
only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles
won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

THE DIVINITY

(1867)

"Yes, write it in the rock," Saint Bernard
said,
"Grave it on brass with adamantine pen!
'Tis God himself becomes apparent, when
God's wisdom and God's goodness are dis-
played,
For God of these his attributes is
made." — 5
Well spake the impetuous Saint, and bore
of men
The suffrage captive; now, not one in ten
Recalls the obscure opposer he outweighed.
God's wisdom and God's goodness! — Ay,
but fools
Mis-define these till God knows them no
more. 10
Wisdom and goodness, they are God! —
what schools
Have yet so much as heard this simpler
lore?
This no Saint preaches, and this no Church
rules;
'Tis in the desert, now and heretofore.

DOVER BEACH

(1867)

The sea is calm tonight,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast
the light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England
stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil
bay. 5
Come to the window, sweet is the night-
air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd
land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back,
and fling, 10
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago 15
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern
sea. 20

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round
earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, 25
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges
drear
And naked shingles of the world.
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which
seems 30
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor
light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for
pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain 35
Swept with confused alarms of struggle
and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

PIS-ALLER

(1867)

"Man is blind because of sin,
Revelation makes him sure;
Without that, who looks within,
Looks in vain, for all's obscure."

Nay, look closer into man! 5
Tell me, can you find indeed
Nothing sure, no moral plan
Clear prescribed, without your creed?

"No, I nothing can perceive!
Without that, all's dark for men. 10
That, or nothing, I believe." —
For God's sake, believe it then!

PALLADIUM

(1867)

Set where the upper streams of Simoïs
flow

Was the Palladium, high 'mid rock and
wood;
And Hector was in Ilium, far below,
And fought, and saw it not — but there
it stood!

It stood, and sun and moonshine rained
their light 5
On the pure columns of its glen-built hall,
Backward and forward rolled the waves
of fight

Round Troy — but while this stood, Troy
could not fall.

So, in its lovely moonlight, lives the soul.
Mountains surround it and sweet virgin
air; 10

Cold plashing, past it, crystal waters roll;
We visit it by moments, ah, too rare!

We shall renew the battle in the plain
Tomorrow; red with blood will Xanthus
be;

Hector and Ajax will be there again, 15
Helen will come upon the wall to see.

Then we shall rust in shade, or shine in
strife,
And fluctuate 'twixt blind hopes and blind
despairs,
And fancy that we put forth all our life,
And never know how with the soul it
fares. 20

Still doth the soul, from its lone fastness
high,
Upon our life a ruling effluence send.
And when it fails, fight as we will, we
die;
And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.

A WISH

(1867)

I ask not that my bed of death
From bands of greedy heirs be free;
For these besiege the latest breath
Of fortune's favored sons, not me.

I ask not each kind soul to keep 5
Tearless, when of my death he hears.
Let those who will, if any, weep!
There are worse plagues on earth than
tears.

I ask but that my death may find
The Freedom to my life denied; 10
Ask but the folly of mankind
Then, then at last, to quit my side.

Spare me the whispering, crowded room,
The friends who come, and gape, and go;
The ceremonious air of gloom — 15
All, which makes death a hideous show!

Nor bring, to see me cease to live,
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
To shake his sapient head, and give
The ill he cannot cure a name. 20

Nor fetch, to take the accustomed toll
Of the poor sinner bound for death,
His brother-doctor of the soul,
To canvass with official breath

The future and its viewless things — 25
That undiscovered mystery
Which one who feels death's winnowing
wings
Must needs read clearer, sure, than he!

Bring none of these; but let me be,
While all around in silence lies, 30
Moved to the window near, and see
Once more, before my dying eyes,

Bathed in the sacred dews of morn
The wide aerial landscape spread —
The world which was ere I was born, 35
The world which lasts when I am dead;

Which never was the friend of *one*,
Nor promised love it could not give,
But lit for all its generous sun,
And lived itself, and made us live. 40

There let me gaze, till I become
In soul, with what I gaze on, wed!
To feel the universe my home;
To have before my mind — instead

Of the sick room, the mortal strife, 45
The turmoil for a little breath —
The pure eternal course of life,
Not human combatings with death!

Thus feeling, gazing, might I grow
Composed, refreshed, ennobled, clear; 50
Then willing let my spirit go
To work or wait elsewhere or here!

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER, 1857

(1867)

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace, 5
Silent; — hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!

The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows; — but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere, 10
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah! 15
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigor, again;
In the gloom of November we passed
Days not dark at thy side; 20
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening and think
Of bygone autumns with thee. 25

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years, 30
We who till then in thy shade
Restored as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone, 35
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar, 40
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past, 45
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live —
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraiest with zeal
The humble good from the ground, 50
Sternly represses the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse

Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest! — this was thy work;
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth? —
Most men eddy about
Here and there — eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die —
Perish; — and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path —
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance! — but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth —
Then on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breached
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep — the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge

Their hanging ruin; alas,
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends who set forth at our side
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On — and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs —
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripped, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing — to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.
And through thee I believe

In the noble and great who are gone;
 Pure souls honored and blest
 By former ages, who else
 Such, so soulless, so poor,
 Is the race of men whom I see — 150
 Seemed but a dream of the heart,
 Seemed but a cry of desire.
 Yes! I believe that there lived
 Others like thee in the past,
 Not like the men of the crowd 155
 Who all round me today
 Bluster or cringe, and make life
 Hideous, and arid, and vile;
 But souls tempered with fire,
 Fervent, heroic, and good, 160
 Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! — or sons
 Shall I not call you? because
 Not as servants ye knew
 Your Father's innermost mind, 165
 His, who unwillingly sees
 One of his little ones lost —
 Yours is the praise, if mankind
 Hath not as yet in its march
 Fainted, and fallen, and died! 170

See! In the rocks of the world
 Marches the host of mankind,
 A feeble, wavering line.
 Where are they tending? — A God
 Marshalled them, gave them their goal. 175
 Ah, but the way is so long!
 Years they have been in the wild!
 Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
 Rising all round, overawe;
 Factions divide them, their host 180
 Threatens to break, to dissolve.
 — Ah, keep them combined!
 Else, of the myriads who fill
 That army, not one shall arrive;
 Sole they shall stray; in the rocks 185
 Stagger for ever in vain.
 Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
 Of your fainting, dispirited race,
 Ye, like angels, appear, 190
 Radiant with ardor divine!

Beacons of hope, ye appear!
 Languor is not in your heart,
 Weakness is not in your word,
 Weariness not on your brow. 195
 Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
 Panic, despair, flee away.
 Ye move through the ranks, recall
 The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
 Praise, re-inspire the brave! 200
 Order, courage, return!
 Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
 Follow your steps as ye go.
 Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
 Strengthen the wavering line, 205
 Stablish, continue our march,
 On, to the bound of the waste,
 On, to the City of God.

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

(1867)

*Savez-vous quelque bien qui console du regret
 d'un monde?* OBERMANN.

Glion? — Ah, twenty years, it cuts
 All meaning from a name!
 White houses prank where once were huts.
 Glion, but not the same!

And yet I know not! All unchanged 5
 The turf, the pines, the sky!
 The hills in their old order ranged;
 The lake, with Chillon by!

And, 'neath those chestnut-trees, where
 stiff
 And stony mounts the way, 10
 The crackling husk-heaps burn, as if
 I left them yesterday!

Across the valley, on that slope,
 The huts of Avant shine!
 Its pines, under their branches, ope 15
 Ways for the pasturing kine.

Full-foaming milk-pails, Alpine fare,
 Sweet heaps of fresh-cut grass,
 Invite to rest the traveller there
 Before he climb the pass — 20

The gentian-flowered pass, its crown
With yellow spires aflame;
Whence drops the path to Allière down,
And walls where Byron came.

By their green river, who doth change 25
His birth-name just below;
Orchard, and croft, and full-stored grange
Nursed by his pastoral flow.

But stop! — to fetch back thoughts that
stray
Beyond this gracious bound, 30
The cone of Jaman, pale and gray,
See, in the blue profound!

Ah, Jaman! delicately tall
Above his sun-warmed firs —
What thoughts to me his rocks recall, 35
What memories he stirs!

And who but thou must be, in truth,
Obermann! with me here?
Thou master of my wandering youth,
But left this many a year! 40

Yes, I forget the world's work wrought,
Its warfare waged with pain;
An eremite with thee, in thought
Once more I slip my chain,

And to thy mountain-chalet come, 45
And lie beside its door,
And hear the wild bee's Alpine hum,
And thy sad, tranquil lore!

Again I feel the words inspire 50
Their mournful calm; serene,
Yet tinged with infinite desire
For all that *might* have been —

The harmony from which man swerved
Made his life's rule once more!
The universal order served, 55
Earth happier than before!

— While thus I mused, night gently ran
Down over hill and wood.
Then, still and sudden, Obermann
On the grass near me stood. 60

Those pensive features well I knew,
On my mind, years before,
Imaged so oft! imaged so true!
— A shepherd's garb he wore,

A mountain-flower was in his hand, 65
A book was in his breast.
Bent on my face, with gaze which scanned
My soul, his eyes did rest.

"And is it thou," he cried, "so long
Held by the world which we 70
Loved not, who turnest from the throng
Back to thy youth and me?"

"And from thy world, with heart oppress,
Chooseth thou *now* to turn? —
Ah me! we anchorites read things best, 75
Clearest their course discern!

"Thou fledst me when the ungenial earth,
Man's work-place, lay in gloom.
Return'st thou in her hour of birth,
Of hopes and hearts in bloom? 80

"Perceiv'st thou not the change of day?
Ah! Carry back thy ken,
What, some two thousand years! Survey
The world as it was then!

"Like ours it looked in outward air. 85
Its head was clear and true,
Sumptuous its clothing, rich its fare,
No pause its action knew;

"Stout was its arm, each thew and bone
Seemed puissant and alive — 90
But, ah! its heart, its heart was stone,
And so it could not thrive!

"On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell.
Deep weariness and sated lust 95
Made human life a hell.

"In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay;
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian Way. 100

"He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crowned his hair with flowers —
No easier nor no quicker passed
The impracticable hours.

"The brooding East with awe beheld 105
Her impious younger world.
The Roman tempest swelled and swelled,
And on her head was hurled.

"The East bowed low before the blast 110
In patient, deep disdain:
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

"So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit gray;
A conquering, new-born joy awoke, 115
And filled her life with day.

"'Poor world,' she cried, 'so deep accurst,
That runn'st from pole to pole
To seek a draught to slake thy thirst —
Go, seek it in thy soul!' 120

"She heard it, the victorious West,
In crown and sword arrayed!
She felt the void which mined her breast,
She shivered and obeyed.

"She veiled her eagles, snapped her sword,
And laid her sceptre down; 126
Her stately purple she abhorred,
And her imperial crown.

"She broke her flutes, she stopped her
sports,
Her artists could not please; 130
She tore her books, she shut her courts,
She fled her palaces;

"Lust of the eye and pride of life
She left it all behind,
And hurried, torn with inward strife, 135
The wilderness to find.

"Tears washed the trouble from her face!
She changed into a child!
'Mid weeds and wrecks she stood — a
place
Of ruin — but she smiled! 140

"Oh, had I lived in that great day,
How had its glory new
Filled earth and heaven, and caught away
My ravished spirit too!

"No thoughts that to the world belong 145
Had stood against the wave
Of love which set so deep and strong
From Christ's then open grave.

"No cloister-floor of humid stone
Had been too cold for me. 150
For me no Eastern desert lone
Had been too far to flee.

"No lonely life had passed too slow,
When I could hourly scan
Upon his Cross, with head sunk low, 155
That nailed, thorn-crowned Man!

"Could see the Mother with her Child,
Whose tender winning arts
Have to his little arms beguiled
So many wounded hearts! 160

"And centuries came and ran their course,
And unspent all that time
Still, still went forth that Child's dear
force,
And still was at its prime.

"Ay, ages long endured his span 165
Of life — 'tis true received —
That gracious Child, that thorn-crowned
Man!
— He lived while we believed.

"While we believed, on earth he went,
And open stood his grave. 170
Men called from chamber, church, and
tent;
And Christ was by to save.

"Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town;
And on his grave, with shining eyes, 175
The Syrian stars looked down.

"In vain men still, with hoping new,
Regard his death-place dumb,
And say the stone is not yet to,
And wait for words to come. 180

"Ah, o'er that silent sacred land,
Of sun, and arid stone,
And crumbling wall, and sultry sand,
Sounds now one word alone!

"Unduped of fancy, henceforth man 185
Must labor! — must resign
His all too human creeds and scan
Simply the way divine!

"But slow that tide of common thought,
Which bathed our life, retired; 190
Slow, slow the old world wore to nought,
And pulse by pulse expired.

"Its frame yet stood without a breach
When blood and warmth were fled;
And still it spake its wonted speech — 195
But every word was dead.

"And oh, we cried, that on this corse
Might fall a freshening storm!
Rive its dry bones, and with new force
A new-sprung world inform! 200

"— Down came the storm! O'er France
it passed
In sheets of scathing fire;
All Europe felt that fiery blast,
And shook as it rushed by her.

"Down came the storm! In ruins fell 205
The worn-out world we knew.
— It passed, that elemental swell!
Again appeared the blue;

"The sun shone in the new-washed sky,
And what from heaven saw he? 210
Blocks of the past, like icebergs high,
Float on a rolling sea!

"Upon them plies the race of man
All it before endeavored;
'Ye live,' I cried, 'ye work and plan, 215
And know not ye are severed!

"'Poor fragments of a broken world
Whereon men pitch their tent!
Why were ye too to death not hurled
When your world's day was spent? 220

"That glow of central fire is done
Which with its fusing flame
Knit all your parts, and kept you one —
But ye, ye are the same!

"The past, its mask of union on, 225
Had ceased to live and thrive.
The past, its mask of union gone,
Say, is it more alive?

"Your creeds are dead, your rites are
dead,
Your social order too! 230
Where tarries he, the Power who said:
See, I make all things new?

"The millions suffer still, and grieve,
And what can helpers heal
With old-world cures men half believe 235
For woes they wholly feel?

"And yet men have such need of joy!
But joy whose grounds are true;
And joy that should all hearts employ
As when the past was new. 240

"Ah, not the emotion of that past,
Its common hope, were vain!
Some new such hope must dawn at last,
Or man must toss in pain.

"But now the old is out of date, 245
The new is not yet born,
And who can be *alone* elate,
While the world lies forlorn?"

"Then to the wilderness I fled. —
There among Alpine snows 250
And pastoral huts I hid my head,
And sought and found repose.

"It was not yet the appointed hour.
Sad, patient, and resigned,
I watched the crocus fade and flower, 255
I felt the sun and wind.

"The day I lived in was not mine,
Man gets no second day.
In dreams I saw the future shine —
But ah! I could not stay! 260

"Action I had not, followers, fame;
I passed obscure, alone.
The after-world forgets my name,
Nor do I wish it known.

"Composed to bear, I lived and died," 265
And knew my life was vain,
With fate I murmur not, nor chide.
At Sèvres by the Seine

"(If Paris that brief flight allow)
My humble tomb explore! 270
It bears: *Eternity, be thou*
My refuge! and no more.

"But thou, whom fellowship of mood
Did make from haunts of strife
Come to my mountain-solitude, 275
And learn my frustrate life;

"O thou, who, ere thy flying span
Was past of cheerful youth,
Didst find the solitary man
And love his cheerless truth — 280

"Despair not thou as I despaired,
Nor be cold gloom thy prison!
Forward the gracious hours have fared,
And see! the sun is risen!

"He breaks the winter of the past; 285
A green, new earth appears.
Millions, whose life in ice lay fast,
Have thoughts, and smiles, and tears.

"What though there still need effort,
strife?
Though much be still unwon? 290
Yet warm it mounts, the hour of life!
Death's frozen hour is done!

"The world's great order dawns in sheen,
After long darkness rude,
Divinelier imaged, clearer seen, 295
With happier zeal pursued.

"With hope extinct and brow composed
I marked the present die;
Its term of life was nearly closed,
Yet it had more than I. 300

"But thou, though to the world's new hour
Thou come with aspect marred,
Shorn of the joy, the bloom, the power
Which best befits its bard —

"Though more than half thy years be
past, 305
And spent thy youthful prime;
Though, round thy firmer manhood cast
Hang weeds of our sad time

"Whereof thy youth felt all the spell,
And traversed all the shade — 310
Though late, though dimmed, though
weak, yet tell
Hope to a world new-made!

"Help it to fill that deep desire,
The want which racked our brain,
Consumed our heart with thirst like
fire, 315
Immedicable pain;

"Which to the wilderness drove out
Our life, to Alpine snow,
And palsied all our word with doubt,
And all our work with woe — 320

"What still of strength is left, employ,
This end to help attain:
One common wave of thought and joy
Lifting mankind again!"

— The vision ended. I awoke 325
As out of sleep, and no
Voice moved; — only the torrent broke
The silence, far below.

Soft darkness on the turf did lie.
Solemn, o'er hut and wood, 330
In the yet star-sown nightly sky,
The peak of Jaman stood.

Still in my soul the voice I heard
Of Obermann! — away
I turned; by some vague impulse
stirred, 335
Along the rocks of Naye

Past Sonchaud's piny flanks I gaze
And the blanched summit bare
Of Malatrait, to where in haze
The Valais opens fair, 340

And the domed Velan, with his snows,
Behind the upcrowding hills,
Doth all the heavenly opening close
Which the Rhone's murmur fills;—

And glorious there, without a sound, 345
Across the glimmering lake,
High in the Valais-depth profound,
I saw the morning break.

EMILY BRONTË (1818-1848)

NO COWARD SOUL IS MINE (1850)

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled
sphere:

I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from
fear.

O God within my breast, 5
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life — that in me has rest,
As I — undying life — have power in
Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably
vain; 10

Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity;
So surely anchored on 15
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and
rears. 20

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in thee.

There is not room for Death 25
Nor atom that his might could render
void:

Thou — THOU art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be de-
stroyed.

GEORGE ELIOT (1819-1880)

O MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE (1867)

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence:
live

In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn 5
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night
like stars,

And with their mild persistence urge man's
search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world, 10
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of
man.

So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and
agonized

With widening retrospect that bred de-
spair. 15

Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting har-
monies, 20
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,

That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the
world,

Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better — saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary, 26
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with
love —

That better self shall live till human
Time 30
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread for ever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more
glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I
reach 36

That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty —
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused, 40
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

W. J. CORY
(1823-1892)

MIMNERMUS IN CHURCH (1858)

You promise heavens free from strife,
Pure truth, and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet is this human life, —
So sweet, I fain would breathe it still:
Your chilly stars I can forgo, 5
This warm kind world is all I know.

You say there is no substance here,
One great reality above:
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
And child-like hide myself in love. 10
Show me what angels feel: till then,
I cling, a mere weak man, to men.

You bid me lift my mean desires
From faltering lips and fitful veins
To sexless souls, ideal quires, 15
Unwearied voices, wordless strains:
My mind with fonder welcome owns
One dear dead friend's remembered tones.

Forsooth, the present we must give
To that which cannot pass away! 20
All beauteous things for which we live
By laws of time and space decay!
But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die.

GEORGE MACDONALD
(1824-1905)

DE PROFUNDIS

When I am dead unto myself, and let,
O Father, thee live on in me,
Contented to do nought but pay my debt,
And leave the house to thee,

Then shall I be thy ransomed — from the
cark 5
Of living, from the strain for breath,
From tossing in my coffin strait and
dark,
At hourly strife with death!

Have mercy! In my coffin! and awake!
A buried temple of the Lord! 10
Grow, Temple, grow! Heart, from thy
cerements break!
Stream out, O living Sword!

When I am with thee as thou art with me,
Life will be self-forgetting power;
Love, ever conscious, buoyant, clear, and
free, 15
Will flame in darkest hour.

Where now I sit alone, unmoving, calm,
With windows open to thy wind, —
Shall I not know thee in the radiant psalm
Soaring from heart and mind? 20

The body of this death will melt away,
And I shall know as I am known;
Know thee my father, every hour and day,
As thou know'st me thine own!

THIS INFANT WORLD

(From A Memorial of Africa)

This infant world has taken long to make,
Nor hast Thou done with it, but mak'st it
yet,
And wilt be working on when death has
set

A new mound in some churchyard for my
sake.

On flow the centuries without a break: 5
Uprise the mountains, ages without let;
The lichens suck; the hard rock's breast
they fret:

Years more than past, the young earth yet
will take.

But in the dumbness of the rolling time,
No veil of silence shall encompass me — 10
Thou wilt not once forget and let me be:
Rather wouldst thou some old chaotic
prime

Invade, and, moved by tenderness sublime,
Unfold a world, that I, thy child, might
see.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

(1830-1894)

TWO PURSUITS

(1849)

A voice said, "Follow, follow"; and I rose
And followed far into the dreamy night,
Turning my back upon the pleasant light.
It led me where the bluest water flows,
And would not let me drink; where the
corn grows 5

I dared not pause, but went uncheered by
sight

Or touch: until at length in evil plight
It left me, wearied out with many woes.

Some time I sat as one bereft of sense:
But soon another voice from very far 10
Called, "Follow, follow"; and I rose again.
Now on my night has dawned a blessed
star:

Kind steady hands my sinking steps sustain,
And will not leave me till I shall go hence.

WHAT IS IT JESUS SAITH

(1850-86)

What is it Jesus saith unto the soul?

"Take up the Cross, and come and follow
Me."

One word He saith to all men: none may
be

Without a cross yet hope to touch the goal.
Then heave it bravely up, and brace thy
whole 5

Body to bear: it will not weigh on thee
Past strength; or if it crush thee to thy
knee

Take heart of grace, for grace shall be thy
dole.

Give thanks today, and let tomorrow take
Heed to itself; today imports thee more. 10
Tomorrow may not dawn like yesterday:

Until that unknown morrow go thy way,
Suffer and work and strive for Jesus'
sake —

Who tells thee what tomorrow keeps in
store?

REST

(1849)

O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching,
Earth:

Lie close around her; leave no room for
mirth

With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of
sighs.

She hath no questions, she hath no re-
plies, — 5

Hushed in and curtained with a blessed
dearth

Of all that irked her from the hour of
birth;

With stillness that is almost Paradise.
 Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth
 her,
 Silence more musical than any song: 10
 Even her very heart has ceased to stir.
 Until the morning of Eternity
 Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
 And when she wakes, she will not think it
 long.

A SOUL

(1854)

She stands as pale as Parian statues stand;
 Like Cleopatra when she turned at bay,
 And felt her strength above the Roman
 sway,
 And felt the aspic writhing in her hand.
 Her face is steadfast toward the shadowy
 land, 5
 For dim beyond it looms the land of day.
 Her feet are steadfast: all the arduous
 way
 That foot-track doth not waver on the
 sand.
 She stands there like a beacon through the
 night,
 A pale clear beacon where the storm-drift
 is, — 10
 She stands alone, a wonder deathly-white:
 She stands there patient, nerved with inner
 might,
 Indomitable in her feebleness, —
 Her face and will athirst against the light.

ECHO

(1854)

Come to me in the silence of the night;
 Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
 Come with soft rounded cheeks, and eyes
 as bright
 As sunlight on a stream:
 Come back in tears, 5
 O memory, hope, love of finished years.
 O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter
 sweet,
 Whose wakening should have been in
 Paradise,

Where souls brimful of love abide and
 meet;

Where thirsting longing eyes 10

Watch the slow door

That, opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
 My very life again though cold in death:
 Come back to me in dreams, that I may
 give 15

Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:

Speak low, lean low,

As long ago, my love, how long ago.

PASSING AWAY

(1860)

Passing away, saith the World, passing
 away: —

Chances, beauty, and youth, sapped day by
 day;

Thy life never continueth in one stay.

Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair
 changing to grey

That hath won neither laurel nor bay? 5

I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in
 May:

Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy
 decay

On my bosom for aye. —

Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my Soul, passing
 away: — 10

With its burden of fear and hope, of labor
 and play,

Hearken what the past doth witness and
 say:

Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,
 A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must
 decay.

At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one
 certain day 15

Lo the Bridegroom shall come and shall
 not delay;

Watch thou and pray. —

Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing
away:—

Winter passeth after the long delay: 20
New grapes on the vine, new figs on the
tender spray,

Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.

Though I tarry, wait for Me, trust Me,
watch and pray:

Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is
day,

My love, My sister, My spouse,—thou
shalt hear Me say.— 25

Then I answered: Yea.

LORD, GRANT US CALM

(1893)

Lord, grant us calm, if calm can set forth
Thee;

Or tempest, if a tempest set Thee forth:

Wind from the east or west or south or
north,—

Or congelation of a silent sea,

With stillness of each tremulous aspen
tree. 5

Still let fruit fall, or hang upon the tree;

Still let the east and west, the south and
north,

Curb in their winds,—or plough a thun-
dering sea:

Still let the earth abide to set Thee forth,
Or vanish like a smoke to set forth
Thee. 10

LORD, DOST THOU LOOK ON ME

(1893)

Lord, dost Thou look on me, and will not I
Launch out my heart to Heaven to look on
Thee?

Here, if one loved me I should turn to see,
And often think on him and often sigh,
And by a tender friendship make reply 5
To love gratuitous poured forth on me,
And nurse a hope of happy days to be,
And mean "until we meet" in each good-
bye.

Lord, Thou dost look and love is in Thine
eyes,

Thy heart is set upon me day and night, 10
Thou stoorest low to set me far above:

O Lord, that I may love Thee make me
wise;

That I may see and love Thee grant me
sight;

And give me love that I may give Thee
love.

PART THREE: THE LATER NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

W. B. SCOTT

(1811-1890)

PYGMALION

"Mistress of gods and men! I have been
thine
From boy to man, and many a myrtle rod
Have I made grow upon thy sacred sod,
Nor ever have I passed thy white shafts
nine
Without some votive offering for the
shrine, 5
Carved beryl or chased bloodstone: aid me
now,
And I will live to fashion for thy brow
Heart-breaking priceless things — O, make
her mine."
Venus inclined her ear; and through the
Stone
Forthwith slid warmth like spring through
sapling-stems; 10
And lo, the eyelid stirred, — beneath had
grown
The tremulous light of life; and all the
hems
Of her zoned peplos shook. Upon his
breast
She sank, — by two dread gifts at once
oppressed.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

(1828-1882)

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

(1847)

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve:
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweighed
The pain naught else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day 5
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare 10
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
The hollow halo it was in 15
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle
sound
Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round. 20

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling
years 25
Heard in each hour, crept off; and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat:
Her needles, as she laid them down, 30
Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled: no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the Newly Born!"
So, as said angels, she did say;
Because we were in Christmas Day, 35
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
 There was a pushing back of chairs,
 As some who had sat unawares
 So late, now heard the hour, and rose. 40

With anxious softly-stepping haste
 Our mother went where Margaret lay,
 Fearing the sounds o'erhead — should
 they
 Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned; 45
 But suddenly turned back again;
 And all her features seemed in pain
 With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
 And held my breath, and spoke no
 word: 50
 There was none spoken; but I heard
 The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept:
 And both my arms fell, and I said,
 "God knows I knew that she was
 dead." 55
 And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, — upon Christmas morn
 A little after twelve o'clock, —
 We said, ere the first quarter struck,
 "Christ's blessing on the newly born!" 60

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

(1847)

The blessed damozel leaned out
 From the gold bar of Heaven:
 Her eyes were deeper than the depth
 Of waters stilled at even;
 She had three lilies in her hand, 5
 And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
 No wrought flowers did adorn,
 But a white rose of Mary's gift,
 For service meetly worn; 10
 Her hair that lay along her back
 Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
 One of God's choristers;
 The wonder was not yet quite gone 15
 From that still look of hers;
 Albeit, to them she left, her day
 Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
 . . . Yet now, and in this place, 20
 Surely she leaned o'er me — her hair
 Fell all about my face. . . .
 Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves;
 The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house 25
 That she was standing on;
 By God built over the sheer depth
 The which is Space begun;
 So high, that looking downward thence
 She scarce could see the sun. 30

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
 Of ether, as a bridge.
 Beneath, the tides of day and night
 With flame and darkness ridge
 The void, as low as where this earth 35
 Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
 'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
 Spoke evermore among themselves
 Their heart-remembered names; 40
 And the souls mounting up to God
 Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
 Out of the circling charm;
 Until her bosom must have made 45
 The bar she leaned on warm,
 And the lilies lay as if asleep
 Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
 Time, like a pulse, shake fierce 50
 Through all the worlds. Her gaze still
 strove
 Within the gulf to pierce
 Its path; and now she spoke as when
 The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon 55
 Was like a little feather
 Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
 She spoke through the still weather:
 Her voice was like the voice the stars
 Had when they sang together. 60

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's
 song,
 Strove not her accents there,
 Fain to be harkened? When those bells
 Possessed the midday air,
 Strove not her steps to reach my side 65
 Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
 For he will come," she said.
 "Have I not prayed in Heaven? — On
 earth,
 Lord, Lord, has he not prayed? 70
 Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
 And shall I feel afraid?"

"When round his head the aureole clings,
 And he is clothed in white,
 I'll take his hand and go with him 75
 To the deep wells of light;
 As unto a stream we will step down,
 And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
 Occult, withheld, untrod, 80
 Whose lamps are stirred continually
 With prayer sent up to God;
 And see our old prayers, granted, melt
 Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of 85
 That living mystic tree
 Within whose secret growth the Dove
 Is sometimes felt to be,
 While every leaf that His plumes touch
 Saith His Name audibly, 90

"And I myself will teach to him, —
 I myself, lying so, —
 The songs I sing here; which his voice
 Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
 And find some knowledge at each pause, 95
 Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
 Yea, one wast thou with me
 That once of old. But shall God lift
 To endless unity 100
 The soul whose likeness with thy soul
 Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
 Where the lady Mary is;
 With her five handmaidens, whose
 names 105
 Are five sweet symphonies, —
 Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
 Margaret, and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
 And foreheads garlanded; 110
 Into the fine cloth white like flame
 Weaving the golden thread,
 To fashion the birth-robcs for them
 Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb: 115
 Then will I lay my cheek
 To his, and tell about our love,
 Not once abashed or weak;
 And the dear Mother will approve
 My pride, and let me speak. 120

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
 To Him round whom all souls
 Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
 Bowed with their aureoles;
 And angels, meeting us, shall sing 125
 To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
 Thus much for him and me:
 Only to live as once on earth
 With Love, — only to be, 130
 As then awhile, for ever now
 Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened, and then said, —
 Less sad of speech than mild, —
 "All this is when he comes." She
 ceased. 135
 The light thrilled towards her, filled
 With angels in strong level flight.
 Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
 Was vague in distant spheres: 140
 And then she cast her arms along
 The golden barriers,
 And laid her face between her hands,
 And wept. (I heard her tears.)

SISTER HELEN

(1853, 1870)

"Why did you melt your waxen man,
 Sister Helen?
 Today is the third since you began." —
 "The time was long, yet the time ran,
 Little brother." 5
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Three days today, between Hell and
 Heaven!)*

"But if you have done your work aright,
 Sister Helen,
 You'll let me play, for you said I
 might." — 10
 "Be very still in your play tonight,
 Little brother."
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Third night, tonight, between Hell and
 Heaven!)*

"You said it must melt ere vesper-bell, 15
 Sister Helen;
 If now it be molten, all is well." —
 "Even so, — nay, peace! you cannot tell,
 Little brother."
*(O Mother, Mary Mother, 20
 O what is this, between Hell and Heaven?)*

"Oh the waxen knave was plump today,
 Sister Helen;
 How like dead folk he has dropped
 away!" —
 "Nay now, of the dead what can you
 say, 25
 Little brother?"
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What of the dead, between Hell and
 Heaven?)*

"See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
 Sister Helen, 30
 Shines through the thinned wax red as
 blood!" —
 "Nay now, when looked you yet on
 blood,
 Little brother?"
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 How pale she is, between Hell and
 Heaven!)* 35

"Now close your eyes, for they're sick and
 sore,
 Sister Helen,
 And I'll play without the gallery
 door." —
 "Ay, let me rest. — I'll lie on the floor,
 Little brother." 40
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What rest tonight, between Hell and
 Heaven?)*

"Here high up in the balcony,
 Sister Helen,
 The moon flies face to face with
 me." — 45
 "Ay, look and say whatever you see,
 Little brother."
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What sight tonight, between Hell and
 Heaven?)*

"Outside it's merry in the wind's
 wake, 50
 Sister Helen;
 In the shaken trees the chill stars
 shake." —
 "Hush, heard you a horse-tread as you
 spake,
 Little brother?"
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What sound tonight, between Hell and
 Heaven?)* 56

"I hear a horse-tread, and I see,
Sister Helen,
Three horsemen that ride terribly."—
"Little brother, whence come the three, 60
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Whence should they come, between Hell
and Heaven?)

"They come by the hill-verge from Boyne
Bar,

Sister Helen, 65
And one draws nigh, but two are afar."—
"Look, look, do you know them who they
are,

Little brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Who should they be, between Hell and
Heaven)

"Oh, it's Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white mane on the
blast." —

"The hour has come, has come at last,
Little brother!" 75

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Her hour at last, between Hell and
Heaven!)

“He has made a sign and called Halloo!
Sister Helen;
And he says that he would speak with
you.” — 80

"Oh tell him I fear the frozen dew,
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Why laughs she thus, between Hell and
Heaven?)

"The wind is loud, but I hear him cry, 85
Sister Helen,
That Keith of Ewern's like to die." —
"And he and thou, and thou and I,
Little brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother, 90
And they and we, between Hell and
Heaven!)

"Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,
Sister Helen,
He sickened, and lies since then for-
lorn." —

"For bridegroom's side is the bride a
thorn,
Little brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and
Heaven!)

"Three days and nights he has lain abed,
 Sister Helen, 100
 And he prays in torment to be dead."—
 "The thing may chance, if he have
 prayed,

Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
If he have prayed, between Hell and
Heaven!*)

“But he has not ceased to cry today,
Sister Helen,
That you should take your curse away.” —
“My prayer was heard,—he need but
pray,

Little brother!" 110
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Shall God not hear, between Hell and
 Heaven?)*

"But he says, till you take back your
ban,

Sister Helen,
His soul would pass, yet never can." 115

"Nay, then, shall I slay a living man,
Little brother?"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"But he calls for ever on your name, 120
Sister Helen,

And says that he melts before a flame." —

"My heart for his pleasure fared the
same,

Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother, 125
Fire at the heart, between Hell and
Heaven!*)

"Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,

For I know the white plume on the
blast." —

"The hour, the sweet hour I forecast, 130
Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and
Heaven?*)

"He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,
Sister Helen; 135

But his words are drowned in the wind's
course." —

"Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear per-
force,

Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
What word now heard, between Hell and
Heaven?*) 140

"Oh he says that Keith of Ewern's cry,
Sister Helen,
Is ever to see you ere he die." —

"In all that his soul sees, there am I,
Little brother!" 145

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
The soul's one sight, between Hell and
Heaven!*)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,
Sister Helen,

And bids you mind the banks of
Boyne." — 150

"What else he broke will he ever join,
Little brother?"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
No, never joined, between Hell and
Heaven!*)

"He yields you these and craves full
fain, 155

Sister Helen,
You pardon him in his mortal pain." —

"What else he took will he give again,
Little brother?"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
Not twice to give, between Hell and
Heaven!*)

"He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen,

That even dead Love must weep to
see." —

"Hate, born of Love, is blind as he, 165
Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
Love turned to hate, between Hell and
Heaven!*)

"Oh, it's Keith of Keith, now, that rides
fast,

Sister Helen, 170

For I know the white hair on the blast." —

"The short, short hour will soon be past,

Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Will soon be past, between Hell and
Heaven!) 175

"He looks at me and he tries to speak,

Sister Helen,

But oh! his voice is sad and weak!" —

"What here should the mighty Baron seek,

Little brother?" 180

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Is this the end, between Hell and
Heaven?)

"Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,

Sister Helen,

The body dies, but the soul shall
live." — 185

"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,

Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

As she forgives, between Hell and
Heaven!)

"Oh he prays you, as his heart would
rive," 190

Sister Helen,

To save his dear son's soul alive." —

"Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,

Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother, 195

Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,

Sister Helen,

To go with him for the love of
God!" —

"The way is long to his son's abode, 200

Little brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

The way is long, between Hell and
Heaven!)

"A lady's here, by a dark steed brought,

Sister Helen, 205

So darkly clad, I saw her not." —

"See her now or never see aught,

Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

What more to see, between Hell and
Heaven?) 210

"Her hood falls back, and the moon shines
fair,

Sister Helen,

On the Lady of Ewern's golden hair." —

"Blest hour of my power and her despair,

Little brother!" 215

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Hour blest and banned, between Hell and
Heaven!)

"Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,
Sister Helen,

'Neath the bridal-wreath three days
ago." — 220

"One morn for pride, and three days for woe,

Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Three days, three nights, between Hell
and Heaven!)

"Her clasped hands stretch from her bending head," 225

Sister Helen;

With the loud wind's wail her sobs are wed." —

"What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,
Little brother?"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother, 230*

What strain but death's, between Hell and Heaven?)

"She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,
Sister Helen;

She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon." —

"Oh! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune," 235

Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven!)

"They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-bow,

Sister Helen, 240

And her moonlit hair gleams white in its flow." —

"Let it turn whiter than winter snow,
Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

Woe-withered gold, between Hell and Heaven!) 245

"O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen!

More loud than the vesper-chime it fell." —

"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,
Little brother!" 250

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen;

Is it in the sky or in the ground?" — 255

"Say, have they turned their horses round,

Little brother?"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have raised the old man from his knee," 260

Sister Helen,

And they ride in silence hastily." —

"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother, 265*

The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,

Sister Helen,

But the lady's dark steed goes alone." —

"And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown," 270

Little brother."

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh the wind is sad in the iron-chill,
Sister Helen, 275

And weary sad they look by the hill." —

"But he and I are sadder still,
Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!) 280

"See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,

Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!" —

"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!" 285

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
Here for a space, between Hell and
Heaven!*)

"Ah! what white thing at the door has
crossed,

Sister Helen?
Ah! what is this that sighs in the
frost?" — 290

"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and
Heaven!*)

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

(1861. Translated from Dante's *Inferno*,
Canto Fifth, lines 112-142)

When I made answer, I began: "Alas!
How many sweet thoughts and how
much desire
Led these two onward to the dolorous
pass!"

Then turned to them, as who would fain
inquire,
And said: "Francesca, these thine agonies
Wring tears for pity and grief that they
inspire;

But tell me,—in the season of sweet
sighs,

When and what way did Love instruct
you so
That he in your vague longings made you
wise?"

Ther she to me: "There is no greater
woe 10

Than the remembrance brings of happy
days

In Misery; and this thy guide doth
know.

But if the first beginnings to retrace
Of our sad love can yield thee solace
here,

So will I be as one that weeps and says. 15
One day we read, for pastime and sweet
cheer,

Of Lancelot, how he found Love tyrannous:

We were alone and without any fear.
Our eyes were drawn together, reading
thus,

Full oft, and still our cheeks would pale
and glow; 20

But one sole point it was that conquered
us.

For when we read of that great lover,
how

He kissed the smile which he had longed
to win,—

Then he whom nought can sever from
me now

Forever, kissed my mouth, all quivering. 25
A Galahalt was the book, and he that
writ:

Upon that day we read no more therein."
At the tale told, while one soul uttered
it,

The other wept: a pang so pitiable
That I was seized, like death, in swoon-
ing-fit, 30

And even as a dead body falls, I fell.

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

(c. 1845)

Not that the earth is changing, O my
God!

Nor that the seasons totter in their walk;
Not that the virulent ill of act and talk

Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod,—
Not therefore are we certain that the rod
Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world;
though now

Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,
So many kings:—not therefore, O my
God!—

But because Man is parcelled out in men
Today; because, for any wrongful blow, 10
No man not stricken asks, "I would be
told

Why thou dost thus"; but his heart
whispers then,
"He is he, I am I"—by this we know
That the earth falls asunder, being old.

THE SEA-LIMITS

(1850)

Consider the sea's listless chime:
Time's self it is, made audible,—
The murmur of the earth's own shell.
Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end: our sight may pass 5
No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's,—it hath
The mournfulness of ancient life,
Enduring always at dull strife. 10
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
Its painful pulse is in the sands.
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Gray and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea, 15
Listen alone among the woods;
Those voices of twin solitudes
Shall have one sound alike to thee:
Hark where the murmurs of thronged
men
Surge, and sink back, and surge
again,— 20
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
And listen at its lips: they sigh
The same desire and mystery,
The echo of the whole sea's speech. 25
And all mankind is thus at heart
Not anything but what thou art:
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

THE WOODSPURGE

(1870)

The wind flapped loose, the wind was still,
Shaken out dead from tree and hill:
I had walked on at the wind's will,—
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,— 5
My lips, drawn in, said not Alas!
My hair was over in the grass,
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon; 10
Among those few, out of the sun,
The woodspurge flowered, three cups in
one.

From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory:
One thing then learnt remains to me,— 15
The woodspurge has a cup of three.

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

(1848-81)

A Sonnet is a moment's monument,—
Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To one dead deathless hour. Look that
it be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent: 5
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time
see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.
A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The Soul,—its converse, to what Power
'tis due: 10
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's caver-
nous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

IV. LOVESIGHT

When do I see thee most, beloved one?
When, in the light, the spirits of mine eyes

Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
 The worship of that Love through thee
 made known?
 Or when, in the dusk hours, (we two
 alone), 5
 Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
 Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage
 lies,
 And my soul only sees thy soul its own?
 O love, my love! if I no more should see
 Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of
 thee, 10
 Nor image of thine eyes in any spring, —
 How then should sound upon Life's dark-
 ening slope
 The ground-whirl of the perished leaves
 of Hope,
 The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

V. HEART'S HOPE

By what word's power, the key of paths
 untrod,
 Shall I the difficult deeps of Love explore,
 Till parted waves of Song yield up the
 shore
 Even as that sea which Israel crossed dry-
 shod?
 For lo! in some poor rhythmic period, 5
 Lady, I fain would tell how evermore
 Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
 Thee from myself, neither our love from
 God.
 Yea, in God's name, and Love's, and thine,
 would I
 Draw from one loving heart such evi-
 dence 10
 As to all hearts all things shall signify:
 Tender as dawn's first hill-fire; and in-
 tense
 As instantaneous penetrating sense,
 In Spring's birth-hour, of other Springs
 gone by.

XIX. SILENT NOON

Your hands lie open in the long, fresh
 grass, —
 The finger-points look through like rosy
 blooms:

Your eyes smile peace. The pasture
 gleams and glooms
 'Neath billowing skies that scatter and
 amass.
 All round our nest, far as the eye can
 pass, 5
 Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
 Where the cow-parsley skirts the haw-
 thorn-hedge.
 'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.
 Deep in the sun-searched growths the
 dragon-fly
 Hangs like a blue thread loosened from
 the sky, — 10
 So this winged hour is dropped to us from
 above.
 Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless
 dower,
 This close-companioned inarticulate hour
 When twofold silence was the song of
 love.

XXI. LOVE-SWEETNESS

Sweet dimness of her loosened hair's down-
 fall
 About thy face; her sweet hands round
 thy head
 In gracious fostering union garlanded;
 Her tremulous smiles; her glances' sweet
 recall
 Of love; her murmuring sighs memorial; 5
 Her mouth's culled sweetness by thy kisses
 shed
 On cheeks and neck and eyelids, and so
 led
 Back to her mouth, which answers there
 for all —
 What sweeter than these things, except
 the thing
 In lacking which all these would lose their
 sweet: 10
 The confident heart's still fervor, — the
 swift beat
 And soft subsidence of the spirit's wing,
 Then when it feels, in cloud-girt way-
 faring,
 The breath of kindred plumes against its
 feet?

XXII. HEART'S HAVEN

Sometimes she is a child within mine
arms,
Cowering beneath dark wings that love
must chase,—
With still tears showering, and averted
face,
Inexplicably filled with faint alarms:
And oft from mine own spirit's hurtling
harms 5
I crave the refuge of her deep embrace,—
Against all ills the fortified strong place
And sweet reserve of sovereign counter-
charms.
And Love, our light at night and shade at
noon,
Lulls us to rest with songs, and turns
away 10
All shafts of shelterless tumultuous day.
Like the moon's growth, his face gleams
through his tune;
And as soft waters warble to the moon,
Our answering spirits chime one rounde-
lay.

XXV. WINGED HOURS

Each hour until we meet is as a bird
That wings from far his gradual way
along
The rustling covert of my soul,—his song
Still loudlier trilled through leaves more
deeply stirred:
But at the hour of meeting, a clear word 5
Is every note he sings, in Love's own
tongue;
Yet, Love, thou know'st the sweet strain
suffers wrong,
Full oft through our contending joys un-
heard.
What of that hour at last, when for her
sake
No wing may fly to me nor song may
flow; 10
When, wandering round my life unleaved,
I know
The bloodied feathers scattered in the
brake,—

And think how she, far from me, with like
eyes
Sees through the untuneful bough the
wingless skies?

XXVII. HEART'S COMPASS

Sometimes thou seem'st not as thyself
alone,
But as the meaning of all things that
are,—
A breathless wonder, shadowing forth
afar
Some heavenly solstice hushed and hal-
cyon;
Whose unstirred lips are music's visible
tone; 5
Whose eyes the sun-gate of the soul
unbar,
Being of its furthest fires oracular:
The evident heart of all life sown and
mown.
Even such love is: and is not thy name
Love?
Yea, by thy hand the Love-god rends
apart 10
All gathering clouds of Night's ambigu-
ous art;
Flings them far down, and sets thine eyes
above;
And simply, as some gage of flower or
glove,
Stakes with a smile the world against thy
heart.

XXXIV. THE DARK GLASS

Not I myself know all my love for thee:
How should I reach so far, who cannot
weigh
Tomorrow's dower by gage of yesterday?
Shall birth and death, and all dark names
that be
As doors and windows bared to some loud
sea, 5
Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face
with spray,—
And shall my sense pierce love, the last
relay

And ultimate outpost of eternity?
 Lo! what am I to Love, the lord of all?
 One murmuring shell he gathers from the
 sand, 10
 One little heart-flame sheltered in his
 hand.
 Yet through thine eyes he grants me clear-
 est call
 And veriest touch of powers primordial
 That any hour-girt life may understand.

LV. STILLBORN LOVE

The hour which might have been yet might
 not be,
 Which man's and woman's heart conceived
 and bore
 Yet whereof life was barren,—on what
 shore
 Bides it the breaking of Time's weary
 sea?
 Bondchild of all consummate joys set
 free, 5
 It somewhere sighs and serves; and, mute
 before
 The house of Love, hears through the
 echoing door
 His hours elect in choral consonancy.
 But lo! what wedded souls now hand in
 hand
 Together tread at last the immortal
 strand 10
 With eyes where burning memory lights
 love home?
 Lo! how the little outcast hour has
 turned
 And leaped to them and in their faces
 yearned:—
 "I am your child: O parents, ye have
 come!"

LVI. TRUE WOMAN: I. HERSELF

To be a sweetness more desired than
 Spring;
 A bodily beauty more acceptable
 Than the wild rose-tree's arch that crowns
 the fell;
 To be an essence more environing

Than wine's drained juice; a music
 ravishing 5
 More than the passionate pulse of Phil-
 omel:
 To be all this 'neath one soft bosom's
 swell
 That is the flower of life—how strange
 a thing!
 How strange a thing to be what Man
 can know
 But as a sacred secret! Heaven's own
 screen 10
 Hides her soul's purest depth and loveliest
 glow;
 Closely withheld, as all things most un-
 seen,—
 The wave-bowered pearl,—the heart-
 shaped seal of green
 That flecks the snowdrop underneath the
 snow.

LVII. TRUE WOMAN: 2. HER LOVE

She loves him; for her infinite soul is
 Love,
 And he her lodestar. Passion in her is
 A glass facing his fire, where the bright
 bliss
 Is mirrored, and the heat returned. Yet
 move
 That glass, a stranger's amorous flame to
 prove, 5
 And it shall turn, by instant contraries,
 Ice to the moon; while her pure fire to
 his
 For whom it burns, clings close i' the
 heart's alcove.
 Lo! they are one. With wifely breast
 to breast
 And circling arms, she welcomes all com-
 mand 10
 Of love,—her soul to answering ardors
 fanned:
 Yet as morn springs, or twilight sinks to
 rest,
 Ah! who shall say she deems not love-
 liest
 The hour of sisterly sweet hand-in-
 hand?

LVIII. TRUE WOMAN: 3. HER HEAVEN

If to grow old in Heaven is to grow
 young
 (As the Seer saw and said), then blest
 were he
 With youth for evermore, whose heaven
 should be
 True Woman, she whom these weak notes
 have sung.
 Here and hereafter, choir-strains of her
 tongue,
 Sky-spaces of her eyes, sweet signs that
 flee
 About her soul's immediate sanctuary,
 Were Paradise all uttermost worlds
 among.
 The sunrise blooms and withers on the
 hill
 Like any hillflower; and the noblest
 troth
 Dies here to dust. Yet shall Heaven's
 promise clothe
 Even yet those lovers who have cherished
 still
 This test for love: in every kiss sealed
 fast
 To feel the first kiss, and forbode the last.

LXVI. THE HEART OF THE NIGHT

From child to youth; from youth to ardu-
 ous man;
 From lethargy to fever of the heart;
 From faithful life to dream-dowered days
 apart;
 From trust to doubt; from doubt to brink
 of ban:
 Thus much of change in one swift cycle
 ran
 Till now. Alas, the soul!—how soon
 must she
 Accept her primal immortality,—
 The flesh resume its dust whence it be-
 gan?
 O Lord of work and peace! O Lord of
 life!
 O Lord, the awful Lord of will! though
 late,

Even yet renew this soul with duteous
 breath:

That when the peace is garnered in from
 strife,

The work retrieved, the will regenerate,
 This soul may see thy face, O Lord of
 death!

LXVII. THE LANDMARK

Was *that* the landmark? What,—the
 foolish well

Whose wave, low down, I did not stoop
 to drink,

But sat and flung the pebbles from its
 brink

In sport to send its imaged skies pellmell
 (And mine own image, had I noted
 well!) —

Was that my point of turning?—I had
 thought

The stations of my course should rise un-
 sought;

As altar-stone or ensigned citadel.

But lo! the path is missed, I must go
 back,

And thirst to drink when next I reach
 the spring

Which once I stained, which since may
 have grown black.

Yet though no light be left nor bird now
 sing

As here I turn, I'll thank God, hastening,
 That the same goal is still on the same
 track.

LXXXVI. LOST DAYS

The lost days of my life until today,

What were they, could I see them on
 the street

Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of
 wheat

Sown once for food, but trodden into
 clay?

Or golden coins squandered and still to
 pay?

Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty
 feet?

Or such spilt water as in dreams must
 cheat
 The undying throats of Hell, athirst
 always?
 I do not see them here; but after death
 God knows I know the faces I shall
 see, 10
 Each one a murdered self, with low last
 breath:
 "I am thyself, — what hast thou done to
 me?"
 "And I — and I — thyself" (lo! each one
 saith),
 "And thou thyself to all eternity!"

CL. THE ONE HOPE

When vain desire, at last, and vain regret
 Go hand in hand to death, and all is
 vain, —
 What shall assuage the unforgotten pain,
 And teach the unforgetful to forget?
 Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long
 unmet, — 5
 Or may the soul at once in a green plain
 Stoop through the spray of some sweet
 life-fountain
 And cull the dew-drenched flowering amu-
 let?
 Ah! when the wan soul, in that golden
 air,
 Between the scripted petals softly
 blown, 10
 Peers breathless for the gift of grace un-
 known, —
 Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
 But only the one Hope's one name be
 there, —
 Not less nor more, but even that word
 alone.

JOHN KEATS

(1881)

The weltering London ways where chil-
 dren weep
 And girls whom none call maidens laugh,
 — strange road
 Miring his outward steps, who inly trode

The bright Castalian brink and Latmos'
 steep:
 Even such his life's cross-paths; till
 deathly deep 5
 He toiled through sands of Lethe; and
 long pain,
 Weary with labor spurned and love found
 vain,
 In dead Rome's sheltering shadow wrap-
 ped his sleep.
 O pang-dowered Poet, whose reverberant
 lips
 And heart-strung lyre awoke the Moon's
 eclipse, — 10
 Thou whom the daisies glory in growing
 o'er, —
 Their fragrance clings around thy name —
 not writ
 But rumored in water, while the fame of
 it
 Along Time's flood goes echoing ever-
 more.

THE KING'S TRAGEDY

JAMES I OF SCOTS.—20TH FEBRUARY, 1437
 (1881)

I, Catherine, am a Douglas born,
 A name to all Scots dear;
 And Kate Barlass they've called me now
 Through many a waning year.
 This old arm's withered now. 'Twas
 once 5
 Most deft 'mong maidens all
 To rein the steed, to wing the shaft,
 To smite the palm-play ball.
 In hall adown the close-linked dance
 It has shone most white and fair; 10
 It has been the rest for a true lord's head,
 And many a sweet babe's nursing-bed,
 And the bar to a King's chambère.
 Ay, lasses, draw round Kate Barlass,
 And hark with bated breath 15
 How good King James, King Robert's
 son,
 Was foully done to death.

Through all the days of his gallant youth
 The princely James was pent, —
 By his friends at first, and then by his
 foes, — 20
 In long imprisonment.

For the elder Prince, the kingdom's heir,
 By treason's murderous brood
 Was slain; and the father quaked for the
 child
 With the royal mortal blood. 25

I' the Bass Rock fort, by his father's care,
 Was his childhood's life assured;
 And Henry, the subtle Bolingbroke,
 Proud England's King, 'neath the south-
 ron yoke
 His youth for long years immured. 30

Yet in all things meet for a kingly man
 Himself did he approve;
 And the nightingale, through his prison-
 wall,
 Taught him both lore and love.

For once, when the bird's song drew him
 close 35
 To the opened window-pane,
 In her bowers beneath a lady stood,
 A light of life to his sorrowful mood,
 Like a lily amid the rain.

And for her sake, to the sweet bird's
 note, 40
 He framed a sweeter Song, —
 More sweet than ever a poet's heart
 Gave yet to the English tongue.

She was a lady of royal blood;
 And when, past sorrow and teen, 45
 He stood where still through his crown-
 less years
 His Scottish realm had been,
 At Scone were the happy lovers crowned,
 A heart-wed King and Queen.

But the bird may fall from the bough of
 youth, 50

And song be turned to moan,
 And Love's storm-cloud be the shadow
 of Hate,
 When the tempest-waves of a troubled
 State
 Are beating against a throne.

Yet well they loved; and the god of
 Love, 55
 Whom well the King had sung,
 Might find on the earth no truer hearts
 His lowliest swains among.

From the days when first she rode abroad
 With Scottish maids in her train, 60
 I, Catherine Douglas, won the trust
 Of my mistress, sweet Queen Jane.

And oft she sighed, "To be born a King!"
 And oft along the way
 When she saw the homely lovers pass 65
 She has said, "Alack the day!"

Years waned, — the loving and toiling
 years:
 Till England's wrong renewed
 Drove James, by outrage cast on his
 crown,
 To the open field of feud. 70

'Twas when the King and his host were
 met
 At the leaguer of Roxbro' hold,
 The Queen o' the sudden sought his camp
 With a tale of dread to be told.

And she showed him a secret letter
 writ 75
 That spoke of treasonous strife,
 And how a band of his noblest lords
 Were sworn to take his life.

"And it may be here or it may be there,
 In the camp or the court," she said; 80
 "But for my sake come to your people's
 arms
 And guard your royal head."

Quoth he, "Tis the fifteenth day of the
siege,

And the castle's nigh to yield." —

"O face your foes on your throne," she
cried, 85

"And show the power you wield;
And under your Scottish people's love
You shall sit as under your shield."

At the fair Queen's side I stood that day
When he bade them raise the siege; 90
And back to his Court he sped to know
How the lords would meet their Liege.

But when he summoned his Parliament,
The louring brows hung round,
Like clouds that circle the mountain-
head 95
Ere the first low thunders sound.

For he had tamed the nobles' lust
And curbed their power and pride,
And reached out an arm to right the
poor

Through Scotland far and wide; 100
And many a lordly wrong-doer
By the headsman's axe had died.

'Twas then upspeke Sir Robert Græme,
The bold o'ermastering man:—

"O King, in the name of your Three
Estates 105
I set you under their ban!

"For, as your lords made oath to you
Of service and fealty,
Even in likewise you pledged your oath
Their faithful sire to be: 110

"Yet all we here that are nobly sprung
Have mourned dear kith and kin
Since first, for the Scottish barons' curse,
Did your bloody rule begin."

With that he laid his hands on his
King: 115

"Is this not so, my lords?"
But of all who had sworn to league with
him
Not one spake back to his words.

Quoth the King: "Thou speak'st but for
one Estate,

Nor doth it avow thy gage. 120

Let my liege lords hale this traitor
hence!"

The Græme fired dark with rage:
"Who works for lesser men than himself,
He earns but a witless wage!"

But soon from the dungeon where he
lay 125

He won by privy plots,
And forth he fled with a price on his
head
To the country of the Wild Scots.

And word there came from Sir Robert
Græme

To the King at Edinbro':— 130

"No Liege of mine thou art; but I see
From this day forth alone in thee
God's creature, my mortal foe.

"Through thee are my wife and children
lost,

My heritage and lands; 135
And when my God shall show me a way,
Thyself, my mortal foe, will I slay
With these my proper hands."

Against the coming of Christmastide
That year the King bade call, 140

I' the Black Friars' Charterhouse of
Perth,
A solemn festival.

And we of his household rode with him
In a close-ranked company;

But not till the sun had sunk from his
throne 145

Did we reach the Scottish Sea.

That eve was clenched for a boding storm,
'Neath a toilsome moon half seen;

The cloud stooped low and the surf rose
high;

And where there was a line of the sky, 150
Wild wings loomed dark between.

And on a rock of the black beach-side,
 By the veiled moon dimly lit,
 There was something seemed to heave
 with life
 As the King drew nigh to it. 155

And was it only the tossing furze
 Or brake of the waste sea-wold?
 Or was it an eagle bent to the blast?
 When near we came, we knew it at last
 For a woman tattered and old. 160

But it seemed as though by a fire within
 Her writhen limbs were wrung;
 And as soon as the King was close to her,
 She stood up gaunt and strong.

'Twas then the moon sailed clear of the
 rack 165
 On high in her hollow dome;
 And still as aloft with hoary crest
 Each clamorous wave rang home,
 Like fire in snow the moonlight blazed
 Amid the champing foam. 170

And the woman held his eyes with her
 eyes:—
 "O King, thou art come at last;
 But thy wraith has haunted the Scottish
 Sea
 To my sight for four years past.

"Four years it is since first I met, 175
 'Twixt the Duchray and the Dhu,
 A shape whose feet clung close in a
 shroud,
 And that shape for thine I knew.

"A year again, and on Inchkeith Isle
 I saw thee pass in the breeze, 180
 With the cerecloth risen above thy feet
 And wound about thy knees.

"And yet a year, in the Links of Forth,
 As a wanderer without rest,
 Thou cam'st with both thine arms i' the
 shroud 185
 That clung high up thy breast.

"And in this hour I find thee here,
 And well mine eyes may note
 That the winding-sheet hath passed thy
 breast
 And risen around thy throat. 190

"And when I meet thee again, O King,
 That of death hast such sore drouth,—
 Except thou turn again on this shore,—
 The winding-sheet shall have moved once
 more
 And covered thine eyes and mouth. 195

"O King, whom poor men bless for their
 King,
 Of thy fate be not so fain;
 But these my words for God's message
 take,
 And turn thy steed, O King, for her sake
 Who rides beside thy rein!" 200

While the woman spoke, the King's horse
 reared
 As if 't would breast the sea;
 And the Queen turned pale as she heard
 on the gale
 The voice die dolorously.

When the woman ceased, the steed was
 still, 205
 But the King gazed on her yet;
 And in silence, save for the wail of the
 sea,
 His eyes and her eyes met.

At last he said:—"God's ways are His
 own;
 Man is but shadow and dust. 210
 Last night I prayed by His altar-stone;
 Tonight I wend to the feast of His Son;
 And in Him I set my trust.

"I have held my people in sacred charge,
 And have not feared the sting 215
 Of proud men's hate,—to His will re-
 signed
 Who has but one same death for a hind
 And one same death for a King.

"And if God in His wisdom have brought
close

The day when I must die, 220
That day by water or fire or air
My feet shall fall in the destined snare
Wherever my road may lie.

"What man can say but the Fiend hath
set

Thy sorcery on my path, 225
My heart with the fear of death to fill,
And turn me against God's very will
To sink in His burning wrath?"

The woman stood as the train rode past,
And moved nor limb nor eye; 230
And when we were shipped, we saw her
there
Still standing against the sky.

As the ship made way, the moon once
more
Sank slow in her rising pall;
And I thought of the shrouded wraith of
the King, 235
And I said, "The Heavens know all."

And now, ye lasses, must ye hear
How my name is Kate Barlass—
But a little thing, when all the tale
Is told of the weary mass 240
Of crime and woe which in Scotland's
realm
God's will let come to pass.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth
That the King and all his Court
Were met, the Christmas Feast being
done, 245
For solace and disport.

'Twas a wind-wild eve in February;
And against the casement-pane,
The branches smote like summoning
hands,
And muttered the driving rain. 250

And when the wind swooped over the
lift

And made the whole heaven frown,
It seemed a grip was laid on the walls
To tug the housetop down.

And the Queen was there, more stately
fair 255

Than a lily in garden set;
And the king was loth to stir from her
side;
For as on the day when she was his bride,
Even so he loved her yet.

And the Earl of Athole, the King's false
friend, 260
Sat with him at the board;
And Robert Stuart, the chamberlain,
Who had sold his sovereign Lord.

Yet the traitor Christopher Chaumber
there
Would fain have told him all, 265
And vainly four times that night he
strove
To reach the King through the hall.

But the wine is bright at the goblet's
brim
Though the poison lurk beneath;
And the apples still are red on the tree 270
Within whose shade may the adder be
That shall turn thy life to death.

There was a knight of the King's fast
friends
Whom he called the King of Love;
And to such bright cheer and courtesy 275
That name might best behave.

And the King and Queen both loved him
well
For his gentle knightliness;
And with him the King, as that eve wore
on,
Was playing at the chess. 280

And the King said (for he thought to jest
And soothe the Queen thereby):—
"In a book 'tis writ that this same year
A king shall in Scotland die.

"And I have pondered the matter o'er, 285
And this have I found, Sir Hugh:
There are but two kings on Scottish
ground,
And those kings are I and you.

"And I have a wife and a newborn heir,
And you are yourself alone; 290
So stand you stark at my side with me
To guard our double throne.

"For here sit I and my wife and child,
As well your heart shall approve,
In full surrender and soothfastness, 295
Beneath your Kingdom of Love."

And the Knight laughed, and the Queen
too smiled;
But I knew her heavy thought,
And I strove to find in the good King's
jest
What cheer might thence be wrought. 300

And I said: "My Liege, for the Queen's
dear love
Now sing the song that of old
You made, when a captive Prince you
lay,
And the nightingale sang sweet on the
spray,
In Windsor's castle-hold." 305

Then he smiled the smile I knew so well
When he thought to please the Queen;
The smile which, under all bitter frowns
Of hate that rose between,
For ever dwelt at the poet's heart 310
Like the bird of love unseen.

And he kissed her hand and took his harp,
And the music sweetly rang;
And when the song burst forth, it seemed
'Twas the nightingale that sang. 315

*"Worship, ye lovers, on this May:
Of bliss your kalends are begun:
Sing with us, Away, Winter, away!
Come, Summer, the sweet season and
sun!
Awake for shame—your heaven is
won— 320
And amorously your heads lift all:
Thank Love, that you to his grace doth
call!"*

But when he bent to the Queen, and sang
The speech whose praise was hers,
It seemed his voice was the voice of the
Spring 325
And the voice of the bygone years.

*"The fairest and the freshest flower
That ever I saw before that hour,
The which o' the sudden made to start
The blood of my body to my heart. 330*

*Ah, Sweet, are ye a worldly creature
Or heavenly thing in form of nature?"*

And the song was long, and richly stored
With wonder and beauteous things;
And the harp was tuned to every
change 335

Of minstrel ministerings:
But when he spoke of the Queen at the
last,
Its strings were his own heart-strings.

*"Unworthy but only of her grace,
Upon Love's rock that's easy and
sure, 340*

*In guerdon of all my lovè's space
She took me her humble creature.
Thus fell my blissful aventure
In youth of love that from day to day
Flowereth aye new, and further I say. 345*

*"To reckon all the circumstance
As it happed when lessen gan my sore,
Of my rancor and woful chance,
It were too long,—I have done there-
for.*

*And of this flower I say no more 350
But unto my help her heart hath tended
And even from death her man defended."*

"Ay, even from death," to myself I said;
 For I thought of the day when she
 Had borne him the news, at Roxbro'
 siege, 355
 Of the fell confederacy.

But Death even then took aim, as he sang,
 With an arrow deadly bright;
 And the grinning skull lurked grimly
 aloof,
 And the wings were spread far over the
 roof 360
 More dark than the winter night.

Yet truly along the amorous song
 Of Love's high pomp and state,
 There were words of Fortune's trackless
 doom
 And the dreadful face of Fate. 365

And oft have I heard again in dreams
 The voice of dire appeal
 In which the King then sang of the pit
 That is under Fortune's wheel.

"And under the wheel beheld I there 370
An ugly Pit as deep as hell,
That to behold I quaked for fear;
And this I heard, that who therein fell
Came no more up, tidings to tell:
Whereat, astound of the fearful sight, 375
I wist not what to do for fright."

And oft has my thought called up again
 These words of the changeful song:
"Wist thou thy pain and thy travail
To come, well might'st thou weep and
wail!" 380
 And our wail, O God! is long.

But the song's end was all of his love;
 And well his heart was graced
 With her smiling lips and her tear-bright
 eyes,
 As his arm went round her waist. 385

And on the swell of her long fair throat
 Close clung the necklet-chain
 As he bent her pearl-tired head aside;
 And in the warmth of his love and pride
 He kissed her lips full fain. 390

And her true face was a rosy red,
 The very red of the rose
 That, couched on the happy garden-bed,
 In the summer sunlight glows.

And all the wondrous things of love 395
 That sang so sweet through the song
 Were in the look that met in their eyes;
 And the look was deep and long.

'Twas then a knock came at the outer
 gate,
 And the usher sought the King. 400
 "The woman you met by the Scottish
 Sea,
 My Liege, would tell you a thing;
 And she says that her present need for
 speech
 Will bear no gainsaying."

And the King said: "The hour is late; 405
 Tomorrow will serve, I ween."
 Then he charged the usher strictly, and
 said,
 "No word of this to the Queen."

But the usher came again to the King,
 "Shall I call her back?" quoth he; 410
 "For as she went on her way, she cried,
 'Woe! Woe! then the thing must
 be!'"

And the King paused, but he did not
 speak.
 Then he called for the voidee-cup:
 And as we heard the twelfth hour
 strike, 415

There by true lips and false lips alike
 Was the draught of trust drained up.

So with reverence meet to King and
 Queen,

To bed went all from the board;
 And the last to leave of the courtly
 train 420
 Was Robert Stuart, the chamberlain,
 Who had sold his sovereign lord.

And all the locks of the chamber-door
 Had the traitor riven and brast;
 And that Fate might win sure way from
 afar, 425
 He had drawn out every bolt and bar
 That made the entrance fast.

And now at midnight he stole his way
 To the moat of the outer wall,
 And laid strong hurdles closely across 430
 Where the traitors' tread should fall.

But we that were the Queen's bower-
 maids
 Alone were left behind;
 And with heed we drew the curtains
 close
 Against the winter wind. 435

And now that all was still through the
 hall,
 More clearly we heard the rain
 That clamored ever against the glass,
 And the boughs that beat on the pane.

But the fire was bright in the ingle-
 nook; 440
 And, through empty space around,
 The shadows cast on the arras'd wall
 'Mid the pictured kings stood sudden and
 tall
 Like spectres sprung from the ground.

And the bed was dight in a deep al-
 cove; 445
 And as he stood by the fire
 The king was still in talk with the Queen,
 While he doffed his goodly attire.

And the song had brought the image
 back
 Of many a bygone year; 450
 And many a loving word they said
 With hand in hand and head laid to
 head;
 And none of us went anear.

But Love was weeping outside the house,
 A child in the piteous rain; 455
 And as he watched the arrow of Death,
 He wailed for his own shafts close in the
 sheath
 That never should fly again.

And now beneath the window arose
 A wild voice suddenly: 460
 And the King reared straight, but the
 Queen fell back
 As for bitter dule to dree;
 And all of us knew the woman's voice
 Who spoke by the Scottish Sea.

"O King," she cried, "in an evil hour 465
 They drove me from thy gate;
 And yet my voice must rise to thine ears;
 But alas! it comes too late!

"Last night at mid-watch, by Aberdour,
 When the moon was dead in the
 skies, 470
 O King, in a death-light of thine own
 I saw thy shape arise.

"And in full season, as erst I said,
 The doom had gained its growth;
 And the shroud had risen above thy
 neck 475
 And covered thine eyes and mouth.

"And no moon woke, but the pale dawn
 broke,
 And still thy soul stood there;
 And I thought its silence cried to my
 soul
 As the first rays crowned its hair. 480

"Since then have I journeyed fast and
 fain
 In very despite of Fate,
 Lest Hope might still be found in God's
 will:
 But they drove me from thy gate.

"For every man on God's ground, O
King, 485

His death grows up from his birth
In a shadow-plant perpetually;
And thine towers high, a black yew-tree,
O'er the Charterhouse of Perth!"

That room was built far out from the
house; 490

And none but we in the room
Might hear the voice that rose beneath,
Nor the tread of the coming doom.

For now there came a torchlight-glare,
And a clang of arms there came; 495
And not a soul in that space but thought
Of the foe, Sir Robert Græme.

Yea, from the country of the Wild Scots,
O'er mountain, valley, and glen,
He had brought with him in murderous
league 500
Three hundred armed men.

The King knew all in an instant's flash,
And like a King did he stand;
But there was no armor in all the room,
Nor weapon lay to his hand. 505

And all we women flew to the door
And thought to have made it fast:
But the bolts were gone, and the bars
were gone,
And the locks were riven and brast.

And he caught the pale queen in his
arms 510

As the iron footsteps fell,—
Then loosed her, standing alone, and said,
"Our bliss was our farewell!"

And 'twixt his lips he murmured a prayer,
And he crossed his brow and breast; 515
And proudly in royal hardihood
Even so with folded arms he stood,—
The prize of the bloody quest.

Then on me leaped the Queen like a deer:
"Catherine, help!" she cried. 520

And low at his feet we clasped his knees
Together side by side:

"Oh! even a King, for his people's sake,
From treasonous death must hide!"

"For *her* sake most!" I cried, and I
marked 525

The pang that my words would wring,
And the iron tongs from the chimney-nook
I snatched and held to the King:

"Wrench up the plank! and the vault
beneath

Shall yield safe harboring." 530

With brows low-bent, from my eager
hand

The heavy heft did he take;
And the plank at his feet he wrenched and
tore;

And as he frowned through the open floor,
Again I said, "For her sake!" 535

Then he cried to the Queen, "God's will
be done!"

For her hands were clasped in prayer.
And down he sprang to the inner crypt;
And straight we closed the plank he had
ripped,

And toiled to smoothe it fair. 540

(Alas! in that vault a gap once was
Wherethrough the King might have
fled;

But three days since close-walled had it
been

By his will; for the ball would roll therein
When without at the palm he played, 545

Then the Queen cried, "Catherine, keep
the door,

And I to this will suffice!"
At her word I rose, all dazed, to my feet,
And my heart was fire and ice.

And louder ever the voices grew, 550
And the tramp of men in mail;

Until to my brain it seemed to be
As though I tossed on a ship at sea
In the teeth of a crashing gale.

Then back I flew to the rest; and hard 555
 We strove with sinews knit
 To force the table against the door;
 But we might not compass it.

Then my wild gaze sped far down the hall
 To the place of the hearthstone-sill; 560
 And the Queen bent ever above the floor,
 For the plank was rising still.

And now the rush was heard on the stair,
 And "God, what help?" was our cry.
 And was I frenzied or was I bold? 565
 I looked at each empty stanchion-hold,
 And no bar but my arm had I!

Like iron felt my arm, as through
 The staple I made it pass —
 Alack! it was flesh and bone, no more! 570
 'Twas Catherine Douglas sprang to the
 door, —
 But I fell back Kate Barlass.

With that they all thronged into the hall,
 Half dim to my failing ken;
 And the space that was but a void before
 Was a crowd of wrathful men. 576

Behind the door I had fallen and lay,
 Yet my sense was wildly aware,
 And for all the pain of my shattered arm
 I never fainted there. 580

Even as I fell, my eyes were cast
 Where the King leaped down to the pit;
 And lo! the plank was smooth in its place,
 And the Queen stood far from it.

And under the litters, and through the
 bed, 585
 And within the presses all,
 The traitors sought for the King, and
 pierced
 The arras around the wall.

And through the chamber they ramped and
 stormed
 Like lions loose in the lair, 590
 And scarce could trust to their very
 eyes, —
 For behold! no King was there.

Then one of them seized the Queen, and
 cried,

"Now tell us, where is thy lord?"
 And he held the sharp point over her
 heart: 595

She drooped not her eyes nor did she start,
 But she answered never a word.

Then the sword half pierced the true, true
 breast —

But it was the Græme's own son
 Cried, "This is a woman, we seek a
 man!" 600

And away from her girdle-zone
 He struck the point of the murderous
 steel;
 And that foul deed was not done.

And forth flowed all the throng like a sea,
 And 'twas empty space once more; 605
 And my eyes sought out the wounded
 Queen,
 As I lay behind the door.

And I said: "Dear Lady, leave me here,
 For I cannot help you now;
 But fly while you may, and none shall
 reck 610
 Of my place here lying low."

And she said, "My Catherine, God help
 thee!"

Then she looked to the distant floor;
 And clasping her hands, "Oh God help
 him,"

She sobbed, "for we can no more!" 615

But God He knows what help may mean,
 If it mean to live or to die;
 And what sore sorrow and mighty moan
 On earth it may cost ere yet a throne
 Be filled in His house on high. 620

And now the ladies fled with the Queen;
 And through the open door
 The night-wind wailed round the empty
 room,
 And the rushes shook on the floor.

And the bed drooped low in the dark recess 625

Whence the arras was rent away;
And the firelight still shone over the space
Where our hidden secret lay.

And the rain had ceased, and the moon-beams lit

The window high in the wall, — 630
Bright beams that, on the plank that I knew,

Through the painted pane did fall
And gleamed with the splendor of Scotland's crown
And shield armorial.

But then a great wind swept up the skies 635

And the climbing moon fell back;
And the royal blazon fled from the floor,
And nought remained on its track;
And, high in the darkened window-pane,
The shield and the crown were black. 640

And what I say next, I partly saw
And partly I heard in sooth;
And partly, since, from the murderers' lips
The torture wrung the truth.

For now again came the armed tread, 645
And fast through the hall it fell;
But the throng was less; and ere I saw,
By the voice without I could tell
That Robert Stuart had come with them,
Who knew that chamber well. 650

And over the space the Græme strode dark

With his mantle round him flung;
And in his eye was a flaming light,
But not a word on his tongue.

And Stuart held a torch to the floor, 655
And he found the thing he sought;
And they slashed the plank away with their swords:
And O God! I fainted not!

And the traitor held his torch in the gap,
All smoking and smouldering; 660
And through the vapor and fire, beneath
In the dark crypt's narrow ring,
With a shout that pealed to the room's high roof

They saw their naked King.

Half naked he stood, but stood as one 665
Who yet could do and dare:

With the crown, the King was stript away, —

The Knight was reft of his battle-array, —

But still the Man was there.

From the rout then stepped a villain forth, 670

Sir John Hall was his name;
With a knife unsheathed he leapt to the vault

Beneath the torchlight-flame.

Of his person and stature was the King
A man right manly strong, 675

And mightily by the shoulder-blades
His foe to his feet he flung.

Then the traitor's brother, Sir Thomas Hall,

Sprang down to work his worst;
And the King caught the second man by the neck 680

And flung him above the first.

And he smote and trampled them under him;

And a long month thence, they bare
All black their throats with the grip of his hands,

When the hangman's hand came there. 685

And sore he strove to have had their knives,

But the sharp blades gashed his hands.
Oh James! so armed, thou hadst battled there

Till help had come of thy bands;
And oh! once more thou hadst held our throne 690

And ruled thy Scottish lands!

But while the King o'er his foes still
raged

With a heart that nought could tame,
Another man sprang down to the crypt:
And, with his sword in his hand hard-
gripped, 695

There stood Sir Robert Græme.

(Now shame on the recreant traitor's
heart

Who durst not face his King
Till the body, unarmed, was wearied out
With twofold combating! 700

Ah! well might the people sing and say,
As oft ye have heard aright:

*"O Robert Græme, O Robert Græme,
Who slew our King, God give thee
shame!"*

For he slew him not as a knight.) 705

And the naked King turned round at bay,
But his strength had passed the goal,
And he could but gasp: "Mine hour is
come;

But oh! to succor thine own soul's doom,
Let a priest now shrive my soul!" 710

And the traitor looked on the King's spent
strength,

And said: "Have I kept my word?

Yea, King, the mortal pledge that I gave?
No black friar's shrift thy soul shall have,
But the shrift of this red sword!" 715

With that he smote his King through the
breast;

And all they three in that pen
Fell on him, and stabbed and stabbed him
there
Like merciless murderous men.

Yet seemed it now that Sir Robert
Græme, 720

Ere the King's last breath was o'er,
Turned sick at heart with the deadly sight
And would have done no more.

But a cry came from the troop above:

"If him thou do not slay, 725

The price of his life that thou dost spare
Thy forfeit life shall pay!"

O God! what more did I hear or see,
Or how should I tell the rest?

But there at length our King lay slain 730
With sixteen wounds in his breast.

O God! and now did a bell boom forth,
And the murderers turned and fled —

Too late, too late, O God, did it sound! —
And I heard the true men mustering
round, 735

And the cries and the coming tread.

But ere they came, to the black death-gap
Somewise did I creep and steal;

And lo! or ever I swooned away,
Through the dusk I saw where the white
face lay 740

In the Pit of Fortune's Wheel.

And now, ye Scottish maids who have
heard

Dread things of the days grown old, —
Even at the last, of true Queen Jane

May somewhat yet be told, 745
And how she dealt for her dear lord's sake
Dire vengeance manifold.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth,

In the fair-lit Death-chapelle,
That the slain King's corpse on bier was
lain 750

With chant and requiem-knell.

And all with royal wealth of balm

Was the body purified:
And none could trace on the brow and lips
The death that he had died. 755

In his robes of state he lay asleep,

With orb and sceptre in hand;
And by the crown he wore on his throne
Was his kingly forehead spanned;

And, girls, 'twas a sweet sad thing to
see 760

How the curling golden hair,
As in the day of the poet's youth,
From the King's crown clustered there.

And if all had come to pass in the brain
That throbbed beneath those curls, 765
Then Scots had said in the days to come
That this their soil was a different home
And a different Scotland, girls!

And the Queen sat by him night and day,
And oft she knelt in prayer, 770
All wan and pale in the widow's veil
That shrouded her shining hair.

And I had got good help of my hurt:
And only to me some sign
She made; and, save the priests that were
there, 775
No face would she see but mine.

And the month of March wore on apace;
And now fresh couriers fared
Still from the country of the Wild Scots
With news of the traitors snared. 780

And still as I told her day by day,
Her pallor changed to sight,
And the frost grew to a furnace-flame
That burnt her visage white.

And evermore as I brought her word, 785
She bent to her dead King James,
And in the cold ear with fire-drawn breath
She spoke the traitors' names.

But when the name of Sir Robert Græme
Was the one she had to give, 790
I ran to hold her up from the floor;
For the froth was on her lips, and sore
I feared that she could not live.

And the month of March wore nigh to its
end,
And still was the death-pall spread; 795
For she would not bury her slaughtered
lord
Till his slayers all were dead.

And now of their dooms dread tidings
came,
And of torments fierce and dire;
And nought she spake — she had ceased to
speak — 800
But her eyes were a soul on fire.

But when I told her the bitter end
Of the stern and just award,
She leaned o'er the bier, and thrice three
times
She kissed the lips of her lord. 805

And then she said: "My King, they are
dead!"
And she knelt on the chapel-floor,
And whispered low with a strange proud
smile:
"James, James, they suffered more!"

Last she stood up to her queenly height, 810
But she shook like an autumn leaf,
As though the fire wherein she burned
Then left her body, and all were turned
To winter of life-long grief.

And "O James!" she said, "my James!"
she said, — 815
"Alas for the woful thing,
That a poet true and a friend of man,
In desperate days of bale and ban,
Should needs be born a King!"

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

WINTER WEATHER (1856)

We rode together
In the winter weather
To the broad mead under the hill;
Though the skies did shiver
With the cold, the river
Ran, and was never still.

No cloud did darken The night; we did hearken The hound's bark far away. It was solemn midnight In that dread, dread night, In the years that have passed for aye.	10	There we sat upright Till the full midnight Should be told from the city's chimes: Sharp from the towers Leaped forth the showers Of the many-clanging rhymes.	50
Two rode beside me, My banner did hide me, As it drooped adown from my lance; With its deep blue trapping The mail overlapping, My gallant horse did prance.	15	'Twas the midnight hour, Deep from the tower Boomed the following bell: Down go our lances, Shout for the lances! The last toll was his knell.	55 60
So ever together In the sparkling weather Moved my banner and lance; And its laurel trapping The steel overlapping, The stars saw quiver and dance.	20	There he lay, dying: He had, for his lying, A spear in his traitorous mouth; A false tale made he Of my true, true lady; But the spear went through his mouth.	65
We met together In the winter weather By the town-walls under the hill; His mail rings came clinking, They broke on my thinking, For the night was hushed and still.	25 30	In the winter weather We rode back together From the broad mead under the hill; And the cock sung his warning As it grew toward morning, But the far-off hound was still.	70
Two rode beside him, His banner did hide him, As it drooped down straight from his lance; With its blood-red trapping The mail over-lapping, His mighty horse did prance.	35	Black grew his tower As we rode down lower, — Black from the barren hill; And our horses strode Up the winding road To the gateway dim and still.	75
And ever together In the solemn weather Moved his banner and lance; And the holly trapping The steel overlapping, Did shimmer and shiver and dance.	40	At the gate of his tower, In the quiet hour, We laid his body there; But his helmet broken, We took as a token: Shout for my lady fair!	80
Back reined the squires Till they saw the spires Over the city wall; Ten fathoms between us, — No dames could have seen us Tilt from the city wall.	45	We rode back together In the wintry weather From the broad mead under the hill; No cloud did darken The night; we did hearken How the hound bayed from the hill.	85 90

THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS
(1858)

Had she come all the way for this,
To part at last without a kiss?
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain
That her own eyes might see him slain
Beside the haystack in the floods? 5

Along the dripping leafless woods,
The stirrup touching either shoe,
She rode astride as troopers do;
With kirtle kilted to her knee,
To which the mud splashed wretchedly. 10
And the wet dripped from every tree
Upon her head and heavy hair,
And on her eyelids broad and fair;
The tears and rain ran down her face.
By fits and starts they rode apace, 15
And very often was his place
Far off from her: he had to ride
Ahead, to see what might betide
When the roads crossed; and sometimes,
when

There rose a murmuring from his men, 20
Had to turn back with promises.
Ah me! she had but little ease;
And often for pure doubt and dread
She sobbed, made giddy in the head
By the swift riding; while, for cold, 25
Her slender fingers scarce could hold
The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
She felt the foot within her shoe
Against the stirrup. All for this:
To part at last without a kiss 30
Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they neared that old soaked hay,
They saw, across the only way,
That Judas, Godmar, and the three
Red running lions dismally 35
Grinned from his pennon, under which
In one straight line along the ditch,
They counted thirty heads.

So then,

While Robert turned round to his men,
She saw at once the wretched end, 40
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend
Her coif the wrong way from her head,

And hid her eyes; while Robert said:
"Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one;
At Poitiers where we made them run 45
So fast — Why, sweet my love, good cheer,
The Gascon frontier is so near,
Nought after this."

But, "O," she said,
"My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you; then 50
The court at Paris; those six men;
The gratings of the Chatelet;
The swift Seine on some rainy day
Like this, and people standing by
And laughing, while my weak hands try 55
To recollect how strong men swim.
All this, or else a life with him,
For which I should be damned at last:
Would God that this next hour were
past!"

He answered not, but cried his cry, 60
"St. George for Marny!" cheerily;
And laid his hand upon her rein.
Alas! no man of all his train
Gave back that cheery cry again;
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast 65
Upon his sword-hilt, some one cast
About his neck a kerchief long,
And bound him.

Then they went along
To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,
Your lover's life is on the wane 70
So fast that, if this very hour
You yield not as my paramour,
He will not see the rain leave off —
Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,
Sir Robert, or I slay you now." 75

She laid her hand upon her brow,
Then gazed upon the palm, as though
She thought her forehead bled, and —
"No,"

She said, and turned her head away,
As there were nothing else to say, 80
And everything were settled. Red
Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:

"Jehane, on yonder hill there stands
My castle, guarding well my lands:
What hinders me from taking you, 85
And doing that I list to do
To your fair wilful body, while
Your knight lies dead?"

A wicked smile
Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
A long way out she thrust her chin: 90
"You know that I should strangle you
While you were sleeping; or bite through
Your throat, by God's help — ah!" she
said,

"Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!
For in such wise they hem me in 95
I cannot choose but sin and sin,
Whatever happens: yet I think
They could not make me eat or drink,
And so should I just reach my rest." —
"Nay, if you do not my behest, 100
O Jehane! though I love you well,"
Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell
All that I know?" — "Foul lies," she
said. —

"Eh! lies, my Jehane? by God's head,
At Paris folks would deem them true! 105
Do you know, Jehane, they cry for
you:

'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!
Give us Jehane to burn or drown!
Eh — gag me Robert! — sweet my friend,
This were indeed a piteous end 110
For those long fingers, and long feet,
And long neck, and smooth shoulders
sweet;

An end that few men would forget
That saw it — So, an hour yet:
Consider, Jehane, which to take 115
Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,
Dismounting, did she leave that place,
And totter some yards: with her face
Turned upward to the sky she lay,
Her head on a wet heap of hay, 120
And fell asleep. And while she slept,
And did not dream, the minutes crept

Round to the twelve again; but she,
Being waked at last, sighed quietly,
And strangely childlike came, and said: 125
"I will not." Straightway Godmar's
head,
As though it hung on strong wires, turned
Most sharply round, and his face burned.

For Robert — both his eyes were dry,
He could not weep, but gloomily 130
He seemed to watch the rain; yea, too,
His lips were firm. He tried once more
To touch her lips; she reached out, — sore
And vain desire so tortured them,
The poor gray lips, — and now the hem 135
Of his sleeve brushed them.

With a start
Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;
From Robert's throat he loosed the
bands
Of silk and mail. With empty hands
Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw 140
The long bright blade without a flaw
Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand
In Robert's hair; she saw him bend
Back Robert's head; she saw him send
The thin steel down. The blow told
well: 145

Right backward the knight Robert fell,
And moaned as dogs do, — being half
dead,
Unwitting, as I deem. So then
Godmar turned grinning to his men,
Who ran, some five or six, and beat 150
His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turned again and said:
"So, Jehane, the first fitte is read!
Take note, my lady, that your way
Lies backward to the Chatelet!" 155
She shook her head and gazed awhile
At her cold hands with a rueful smile,
As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had
Beside the haystack in the floods. 160

From THE EARTHLY PARADISE

(1866-69)

AN APOLOGY

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to
sing;
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years;
Nor for my words shall ye forget your
tears, 5
Or hope again for aught that I can say, —
The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather when, aweary of your mirth,
From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
And, feeling kindly unto all the earth, 10
Grudge every minute as it passes by,
Made the more mindful that the sweet
days die:
Remember me a little then, I pray, —
The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering
care 15
That weighs us down who live and earn
our bread,
These idle verses have no power to bear;
So let me sing of names remembered,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite
away 20
From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due
time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked
straight?
Let it suffice me that my murmuring
rhyme
Beats with light wing against the ivory
gate, — 25
Telling a tale not too importunate
To those who in the sleepy region stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say, a wizard to a northern king
At Christmas-tide such wondrous things
did show, 30
That through one window men beheld the
spring,
And through another saw the summer
glow,
And through a third the fruited vines
a-row, —
While still, unheard, but in its wonted
way,
Piped the drear wind of that December
day. 35

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
If ye will read aright, and pardon me,
Who strive to build a shadowy isle of
bliss
Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
Where tossed about all hearts of men
must be; 40
Whose ravening monsters mighty men
shall slay —
Not the poor singer of an empty day.

PROLOGUE

Forget six counties overhung with
smoke,
Forget the snorting steam and piston-
stroke,
Forget the spreading of the hideous
town:
Think rather of the pack-horse on the
down,
And dream of London, small, and white,
and clean, 5
The clear Thames bordered by its gardens
green.
Think, that below bridge the green lapping
waves
Smite some few keels that bear Levantine
staves
Cut from the yew-wood on the burnt-up
hill,
And pointed jars that Greek hands toiled
to fill, 10

And treasured scanty spice from some far
 sea,
 Florence gold-cloth, and Ypres napery,
 And cloth of Bruges, and hogsheads of
 Guienne;
 While nigh the thronged wharf Geoffrey
 Chaucer's pen
 Moves over bills of lading. ~'Mid such
 times 15
 Shall dwell the hollow puppets of my
 rhymes.

OCTOBER

O love, turn from the unchanging sea, and
 gaze
 Down these grey slopes upon the year
 grown old,
 A-dying mid the autumn-scented haze,
 That hangeth o'er the hollow in the
 wold,
 Where the wind-bitten ancient elms in-
 fold 5
 Grey church, long barn, orchard, and red-
 roofed stead,—
 Wrought in dead days, for men a long
 while dead.

Come down, O love; may not our hands
 still meet,
 Since still we live today, forgetting June,
 Forgetting May, deeming October sweet—
 O hearken! through the after-
 noon, 11
 The grey tower sings a strange old tink-
 ling tune!
 Sweet, sweet, and sad, the toiling year's
 last breath,
 Too satiate of life to strive with death.

And we too—will it not be soft and
 kind, 15
 That rest from life, from patience and
 from pain,
 That rest from bliss we know not where
 we find,
 That rest from Love which ne'er the end
 can gain?—

Hark, how the tune swells, that erewhile
 did wane!
 Look up, love! ah, cling close and never
 move! 20
 How can I have enough of life and love?

NOVEMBER

Are thine eyes weary? Is thy heart too
 sick
 To struggle any more with doubt and
 thought,
 Whose formless veil draws darkening now
 and thick
 Across thee,—e'en as smoke-tinged mist-
 wreaths brought
 Down a fair dale, to make it blind and
 nought? 5
 Art thou so weary that no world there
 seems
 Beyond these four walls, hung with pain
 and dreams?

Look out upon the real world, where the
 moon,
 Half-way 'twixt root and crown of these
 high trees,
 Turns the dead midnight into dreamy
 noon, 10
 Silent and full of wonders; for the breeze
 Died at the sunset, and no images,
 No hopes of day, are left in sky or earth—
 Is it not fair, and of most wondrous
 worth?

Yea, I have looked and seen November
 there: 15
 The changeless seal of change it seemed
 to be,
 Fair death of things that, living once, were
 fair;
 Bright sign of loneliness too great for me,
 Strange image of the dread eternity,—
 In whose void patience how can these
 have part, 20
 These outstretched feverish hands, this
 restless heart?

THE GOLDEN APPLES

ARGUMENT: This tale tells of the voyage of a ship of Tyre, that, against the will of the shipmen, bore Hercules to an unknown land of the West, that he might accomplish a task laid on him by the Fates.

As many as the leaves fall from the tree,
From the world's life the years are fallen away

Since King Eurystheus sat in majesty
In fair Mycenæ; midmost of whose day
It once befell that in a quiet bay 5
A ship of Tyre was swinging nigh the shore,
Her folk for sailing handling rope and oar.

Fresh was the summer morn; a soft wind stole
Down from the sheep-browsed slopes the cliffs that crowned,
And ruffled lightly the long gleaming roll 10
Of the peaceful sea, and bore along the sound
Of shepherd-folk and sheep and questing hound;
For in the first dip of the hillside there
Lay bosomed midst its trees a homestead fair.

Amid regrets for last night, when the moon, 15
Risen on the soft dusk, shone on maidens' feet
Brushing the gold-heart lilies to the tune
Of pipes complaining, o'er the grass down-beat
That mixed with dewy flowers its odor sweet,—
The shipmen labored, till the sail unfurled 20
Swung round the prow to meet another world.

But ere the anchor had come home, a shout
Rang from the strand, as though the ship were hailed;

Whereat the master bade them stay, in doubt

That they without some needful thing had sailed: 25

When, lo! from where the cliffs' steep grey sides failed

Into a ragged stony slip, came twain
Who seemed in haste the ready keel to gain.

Soon they drew nigh; and he who first came down

Unto the surf was a man huge of limb, 30
Grey-eyed, with crisp-curled hair 'twixt black and brown,

Who had a lion's skin cast over him,
So wrought with gold that the fell showed but dim

Betwixt the threads; and in his hand he bore

A mighty club with bands of steel done o'er. 35

Panting there followed him a grey old man,

Bearing a long staff, clad in gown of blue,
Feeble of aspect, hollow-cheeked and wan,
Who when unto his fellow's side he drew,
Said faintly: "Now, do that which thou shouldst do: 40

This is the ship." Then in the other's eye
A smile gleamed, and he spake out merrily:

"Masters, folk tell me that ye make for Tyre,

And after that still nearer to the sun;
And since Fate bids me look to die by fire, 45

Fain am I, ere my worldly day be done,
To know what from earth's hottest can be won;

And this old man, my kinsman, would with me.

How say ye, will ye bear us o'er the sea?"

"What is thy name?" the master said;
 "and know 50
 That we are merchants, and for nought
 give nought;
 What wilt thou pay? Thou seem'st full
 rich, I trow." —
 The old man muttered, stooped adown and
 caught
 At something in the sand. — "E'en so I
 thought,"
 The younger said, "when I set out from
 home; 55
 As to my name, perchance in days to come

"Thou shalt know that; but have heed,
 take this toy,
 And call me the Strong Man." And as he
 spake
 The master's deep-brown eyes 'gan gleam
 with joy,
 For from his arm a huge ring did he
 take, 60
 And cast it on the deck; where it did
 break
 A water-jar, and in the wet shards lay
 Golden, and gleaming like the end of day.

But the old man held out a withered
 hand,
 Wherein there shone two pearls most
 great and fair, 65
 And said: "If any nigher I might stand,
 Then might'st thou see the things I give
 thee here;
 And for my name — a many names I bear,
 But call me Shepherd of the Shore this
 tide,
 And for more knowledge with a good will
 bide." 70

From one to other turned the master's
 eyes;
 The Strong Man laughed as at some hid-
 den jest,
 And wild doubts in the shipman's heart
 did rise;
 But thinking on the thing, he deemed it
 best

To bid them come aboard, and take such
 rest 75
 As they might have of the untrusty sea,
 'Mid men who trusty fellows still should
 be.

Then no more words the Strong Man
 made, but straight
 Caught up the elder in his arms, and so,
 Making no whit of all that added weight,
 Strode to the ship, right through the
 breakers low, 81
 And catching at the rope that they did
 throw
 Out toward his hand, swung up into the
 ship.
 Then did the master let the hawser slip.

The shapely prow cleft the wet mead
 and green. 85
 And wondering drew the shipmen round to
 gaze
 Upon those limbs, the mightiest ever seen;
 And many deemed it no light thing to face
 The splendor of his eye, though they did
 blaze
 With no wrath now, no hate for them to
 dread; 90
 As seaward 'twixt the summer isles they
 sped.

Freshened the wind, but ever fair it
 blew
 Unto the southeast; but as failed the land,
 Unto the plunging prow the Strong Man
 drew,
 And silent, gazing with wide eyes, did
 stand, 95
 As though his heart found rest; but 'mid
 the band
 Of shipmen in the stern the old man sat,
 Telling them tales that no man there
 forgot.

As one who had beheld, he told them
 there
 Of the sweet singer, whom, for his song's
 sake, 100

The dolphins back from choking death did
bear;
How in the mid sea did the vine outbreak
O'er that ill bark when Bacchus 'gan to
wake;
How anigh Cyprus, ruddy with the rose
The cold sea grew as any June-loved
close; 105

While on the flowery shore all things
alive
Grew faint with sense of birth of some
delight,
And the nymphs waited trembling there,
to give
Glad welcome to the glory of that sight. —
He paused, then, ere he told how, wild
and white, 110
Rose ocean, breaking o'er a race accurst,
A world once good, now come unto its
worst.

And then he smiled, and said: "And yet
ye won,
Ye men, and tremble not on days like
these,
Nor think with what a mind Prometheus'
son 115
Beheld the last of the torn, reeling trees
From high Parnassus. Slipping through
the seas,
Ye never think, ye men-folk, how ye seem
From down below, through the green
waters' gleam."

Dusk was it now when these last words
he said, 120
And little of his visage might they see,
But o'er their hearts stole vague and
troublesome dread,
They knew not why; yet ever quietly
They sailed that night; nor might a morn-
ing be
Fairer than was the next morn; and they
went 125
Along their due course after their intent.

The fourth day, 'bout sunrise, from the
mast
The watch cried out he saw Phœnician
land;
Whereat the Strong Man on the elder
cast
A look askance; and he straight took his
stand 130
Anigh the prow, and gazed beneath his
hand
Upon the low sun and the scarce-seen
shore,
Till cloud-flecks rose, and gathered and
drew o'er.

The morn grown cold; then small rain
'gan to fall,
And all the wind dropped dead, and hearts
of men 135
Sank, and their bark seemed helpless now
and small:
Then suddenly the wind 'gan moan again;
Sails flapped, and ropes beat wild about;
and then
Down came the great east wind; and the
ship ran
Straining, heeled o'er, through seas all
changed and wan. 140

Westward, scarce knowing night from
day, they drave
Through sea and sky grown one: the
Strong Man wrought
With mighty hands, and seemed a god to
save;
But on the prow, heeding all weather
nought,
The elder stood, nor any prop he sought,
But swayed to the ship's wallowing, — as
on wings 146
He there were set above the wrack of
things.

And westward still they drave; and if
they saw
Land upon either side, as on they sped,
'Twas but as faces in a dream may draw
Anigh, and fade, and leave nought in their
stead; 151

And in the shipmen's hearts grew heavy
dread
To sick despair: they deemed they should
drive on
Till the world's edge and empty space
were won.

But 'neath the Strong Man's eyes, e'en
as they might 155
They toiled on still; and he sang to the
wind,
And spread his arms to meet the waters
white,
As o'er the deck they tumbled, making
blind
The brine-drenched shipmen; nor with eye
unkind
He gazed up at the lightning; nor would
frown 160
When o'er the wet waste Jove's bolt rat-
tled down.

And they, who at the last had come to
think
Their guests were very gods, with all their
fear
Feared nought belike that their good ship
would sink
Amid the storm; but rather looked to
hear 165
The last moan of the wind that them
should bear
Into the windless stream of ocean grey,
Where they should float till dead was
every day.

Yet their fear mocked them; for the
storm 'gan die
About the tenth day, though unto the
west 170
They drave on still; soon fair and quietly
The morn would break. And though, amid
their rest,
Nought but long evil wandering seemed the
best
That they might hope for; still, despite
their dread,
Sweet was the quiet sea, and goodli-
head 175

Of the bright sun at last come back
again.
And as the days passed, less and less fear
grew,
If without cause, till faded all their pain;
And they 'gan turn unto their guests
anew,
Yet durst ask nought of what that evil
drew 180
Upon their heads; or of returning speak:
Happy they felt, but listless, spent, and
weak.

And now as at the first the elder was,
And sat and told them tales of yore ago;,
But still the Strong Man up and down
would pass 185
About the deck, or on the prow alone
Would stand and stare out westward; and
still on
Through a fair summer sea they went,
nor thought
Of what would come when these days
turned to nought.

And now when twenty days were well
passed o'er 190
They made a new land: cloudy mountains
high
Rose from the sea at first; then a green
shore
Spread fair below them. As they drew
anigh,
No sloping, stony strand could they espy,
And no surf breaking; the green sea and
wide 195
Wherethrough they slipped was driven by
no tide.

Dark fell ere they might set their eager
feet
Upon the shore; but night-long their ship
lay
As in a deep stream, by the blossoms sweet
That flecked the grass whence flowers
ne'er passed away. 200
But when the cloud-barred east brought
back the day,

And turned the western mountain-tops to
gold,
Fresh fear the shipmen in their bark did
hold.

For as a dream seemed all, — too fair
for those
Who needs must die; moreover they could
see, 205

A furlong off, 'twixt apple-tree and rose,
A brazen wall that gleamed out won-
drously
In the young sun, and seemed right long
to be;

And memory of all marvels lay upon
Their shrinking hearts now this sweet
place was won. 210

But when unto the nameless guests they
turned,
Who stood together nigh the plank shot
out

Shoreward, within the Strong Man's eyes
there burned

A wild light, as the other one in doubt
He eyed a moment; then with a great
shout 215

Leaped into the blossomed grass; the
echoes rolled

Back from the hills, harsh still and over-
bold.

Slowly the old man followed him; and
still

The crew held back: they knew now they
were brought

Over the sea the purpose to fulfil 220
Of these strange men; and in their hearts
they thought,

"Perchance we yet shall live, if, meddling
nought

With dreams, we bide here till these twain
come back;

But prying eyes the fire-blast seldom lack."

Yet 'mongst them were two fellows bold
and young, 225
Who, looking each upon the other's face,

Their hearts to meet the unknown danger
strung,

And went ashore, and at a gentle pace
Followed the strangers, who unto the
place

Where the wall gleamed had turned.
Peace and desire 230

Mingled together in their hearts, as nigher

They drew unto that wall, and dulled
their fear.

Fair wrought it was, as though with bricks
of brass;

And images upon its face there were,
Stories of things a long while come to
pass; 235

Nor that alone: as looking in a glass
Its maker knew the tales of what should
be,

And wrought them there for bird and
beast to see.

So on they went. The many birds sang
sweet

Through all that blossomed thicket from
above, 240

And unknown flowers bent down before
their feet;

The very air, cleft by the grey-winged
dove,

Throbbled with sweet scent, and smote
their souls with love.

Slowly they went, till those twain stayed
before

A strangely-wrought and iron-covered
door. 245

They stayed, too, till o'er noise of wind,
and bird,

And falling flower, there rang a mighty
shout

As the Strong Man his steel-bound club
upreared,

And drave it 'gainst the hammered iron
stout;

Where 'neath his blows flew bolt and rivet
out, 250

Till shattered on the ground the great
door lay,
And into the guarded place bright poured
the day.

The Strong Man entered, but his fellow
stayed,
Leaning against a tree-trunk as they
deemed.

They faltered now, and yet all things
being weighed 255

Went on again; and thought they must
have dreamed

Of the old man, for now the sunlight
streamed

Full on the tree he had been leaning on,
And him they saw not go, yet was he gone:

Only a slim green lizard flitted there 260
Amidst the dry leaves. Him they noted
nought;

But, trembling, through the doorway 'gan
to peer,

And still of strange and dreadful saw not
aught, —

Only a garden fair beyond all thought.
And there, 'twixt sun and shade, the
Strong Man went 265

On some long sought-for end, belike, in-
tent.

They 'gan to follow down a narrow
way

Of greensward that the lilies trembled
o'er,

And whereon thick the scattered rose-
leaves lay;

But a great wonder weighed upon them
sore, 270

And well they thought they should return
no more.

Yet scarce a pain that seemed: they looked
to meet,

Before they died, things strange and fair
and sweet.

So still to right and left the Strong Man
thrust

The blossomed boughs, and passed 'on
steadily, 275

As though his hardy heart he well did
trust;

Till in a while he gave a joyous cry,
And hastened on, as though the end drew
nigh;

And women's voices, then, they deemed
they heard,

Mixed with a noise that made desire
afear'd. 280

Yet through sweet scents and sounds on
did they bear

Their panting hearts, till the path ended
now

In a wide space of green: a streamlet
clear

From out a marble basin there did flow;
And close by that a slim-trunked tree did
grow; 285

And on a bough low o'er the water cold,
There hung three apples of red-gleaming
gold.

About the tree, new risen e'en now to
meet

The shining presence of that mighty one,
Three damsels stood, naked from head to
feet 290

Save for the glory of their hair, — where
sun

And shadow flickered, while the wind did
run

Through the grey leaves o'erhead, and
shook the grass

Where nigh their feet the wandering bee
did pass.

But 'midst their delicate limbs and all
around 295

The tree-roots, gleaming blue-black could
they see

The spires of a great serpent; that, en-
wound

About the smooth bole, looked forth
threateningly,

With glittering eyes and raised crest, o'er
the three

Fair heads fresh crowned, and hissed
above the speech 300

Wherewith they murmured softly each to
each.

Now the Strong Man amid the green
space stayed,

And, leaning on his club, with eager eyes
But brow yet smooth, in voice yet friendly
said:

"O daughters of old Hesperus the Wise,
Well have ye held your guard here; but
time tries 306

The very will of gods, and to my hand
Must give this day the gold fruit of your
land."

Then spake the first maid,—sweet as
the west wind

Amidst of summer noon her sweet voice
was: 310

"Ah, me! what knows this place of chang-
ing mind

Of men or gods: here shall long ages
pass,

And clean forget thy feet upon the grass,
Thy hapless bones amid the fruitful
mould;

Look at thy death, envenomed, swift, and
cold!" 315

Hiding new flowers, the dull coils, as
she spake,

Moved near her limbs. But then the sec-
ond one,

In such a voice as when the morn doth
wake

To song of birds, said: "When the world
foredone

Has moaned its last, still shall we dwell
alone 320

Beneath this bough, and have no tales to
tell

Of things deemed great that on the earth
befell."

Then spake the third, in voice as of the
flute

That wakes the maiden to her wedding
morn:

"If any god should gain our golden
fruit, 325

Its curse would make his deathless life
forlorn.

Lament thou, then, that ever thou wert
born;

Yet all things, changed by joy or loss or
pain,

To what they were shall change, and
change again."

"So be it," he said; "the Fates that
drive me on 330

Shall slay me or shall save; blessing or
curse

That followeth after when the thing is
won

Shall make my work no better now nor
worse;

And if it be that the world's heart must
nurse

Hatred against me, how then shall I
choose 335

To leave or take? — Let your dread serv-
ant loose!"

E'en therewith, like a pillar of black
smoke,

Swift, shifting ever, drave the worm at
him:

In deadly silence now that nothing broke,
Its folds were writhing round him trunk

and limb, 340

Until his glittering gear was nought but
dim

E'en in that sunshine, while his head and
side

And breast the fork-tongued, pointed
muzzle tried.

Closer the coils drew, quicker all about
The forked tongue darted, and yet stiff he

stood, 345

E'en as an oak that sees the straw flare
out

And lick its ancient bole for little good:

Until the godlike fury of his mood

Burst from his heart in one great shattering cry —
 And, rattling down, the loosened coils did lie; 350

And from the torn throat and crushed dreadful head
 Forth flowed a stream of blood along the grass.
 Bright in the sun he stood above the dead,
 Panting with fury; yet as ever was
 The wont of him, soon did his anger pass; 355
 And with a happy smile at last he turned
 To where the apples o'er the water burned.

Silent and moveless ever stood the three;
 No change came o'er their faces, as his hand
 Was stretched aloft unto the sacred tree;
 Nor shrank they aught back, though he did stand 361
 So close that tresses of their bright hair,
 fanned
 By the sweet garden breeze, lay light on him,
 And his gold fell brushed by them breast
 and limb.

He drew adown the wind-stirred bough,
 and took 365
 The apples thence; then let it spring away;
 And from his brow the dark hair backward shook,
 And said: "O sweet, O fair, and shall this day
 A curse upon my life henceforward lay, —
 This day alone? Methinks of coming life 370
 Somewhat I know, with all its loss and strife.

"But this I know, at least: the world shall wend
 Upon its way, and, gathering joy and grief
 And deeds done, bear them with it to the end.

So shall it, — though I lie as last year's leaf 375
 Lies 'neath a summer tree, — at least receive
 My life gone by, and store it, with the gain
 That men alive call striving, wrong, and pain.

"So for my part I rather bless than curse, —
 And bless this fateful land: good be with it! 380
 Nor for this deadly thing's death is it worse,
 Nor for the lack of gold: still shall ye sit
 Watching the swallow o'er the daisies flit;
 Still shall your wandering limbs, ere day is done,
 Make dawn desired by the sinking sun. 385

"And now, behold! in memory of all this,
 Take ye this girdle that shall waste and fade
 As fadeth not your fairness and your bliss, —
 That when hereafter 'mid the blossoms laid
 Ye talk of days and men now nothing made, 390
 Ye may remember how the Theban man,
 The son of Jove, came o'er the waters wan."

Their faces changed not aught for all they heard:
 As though all things now fully told out were,
 They gazed upon him without any word.
 Ah! craving kindness, hope, or loving care, 396
 Their fairness scarcely could have made more fair, —
 As with the apples folded in his fell
 He went, to do more deeds for folks to tell.

Now as the girdle on the ground was
cast, 400
Those fellows turned and hurried toward
the door;
And as across its broken leaves they
passed,
The old man saw they not, e'en as before;
But an unearthed blind mole bewildered
sore
Was wandering there in fruitless, aimless
wise, 405
That got small heed from their full-sated
eyes.

Swift gat they to their anxious folk; nor
had
More time than just to say, "Be of good
cheer,
For in our own land may we yet be glad,"
When they beheld the guests a-drawing
near; 410
And much bewildered the two fellows
were
To see the old man, and must even deem
That they should see things stranger than
a dream.

But when they were aboard the elder
cried,
"Up sails, my masters, fair now is the
wind; 415
Nor good it is too long here to abide,
Lest what ye may not loose your souls
should bind."
And as he spake, the tall trees left behind
Stirred with the rising land-wind; and the
crew,
Joyous thereat, the hawsers shipward
drew. 420

Swift sped the ship, and glad at heart
were all,
And the Strong Man was merry with the
rest,
And from the elder's lips no word did fall
That did not seem to promise all the best;
Yet with a certain awe were men op-
pressed, 425

And felt as if their inmost hearts were
bare,
And each man's secret babbled through the
air.

Still oft the old man sat with them and
told
Tales of past time, as on the outward
way;
And now would they the face of him
behold 430
And deem it changed: the years that on
him lay
Seemed to grow nought; and no more wan
and grey
He looked, but ever glorious, wise and
strong,
As though no lapse of time for him were
long.

At last, when six days through the
kindly sea 435
Their keel had slipped, he said: "Come
hearken now,
For so it is that things fare wondrously
E'en in these days; and I a tale can show
That, told by you unto your sons, shall
grow
A marvel of the days that are to come: 440
Take heed, and tell it when ye reach your
home.

"Yet living in the world a man there is
Men call the Theban King Amphitryon's
son,
Although perchance a greater sire was
his;
But certainly his lips have hung upon 445
Alcmena's breasts. Great deeds this man
hath won
Already, for his name is Hercules,
And e'en ye Asian folk have heard of
these.

"Now ere the moon, this eve in his fast
wane,
Was born, this Hercules, the fated thrall
Of King Eurystheus, was straight bid to
gain 451

Gifts from a land whereon no foot doth
fall

Of mortal man, beyond the misty wall
Of unknown waters; pensively he went
Along the sea, on his hard life intent. 455

"And at the dawn he came into a bay
Where the sea, ebb'd far down, left
wastes of sand,
Walled from the green earth by great
cliffs and grey.

Then he looked up, and wondering there
did stand,
For strange things lay in slumber on the
strand; 460

Strange counterparts of what the firm
earth hath

Lay scattered all about his weary path:

"Sea-lions, and sea-horses, and sea-kine,
Sea-boats, sea-men strange-skinned, of
wondrous hair;

And in their midst a man who seemed
divine 465

For changeless eld; and round him women
fair,

Clad in the sea-webs glassy green and
clear,

With gems on head and girdle, limb and
breast,

Such as earth knoweth not among her
best.

"A moment at the fair and wondrous
sight 470

He stared; then, since the heart in him
was good,

He went about with careful steps and
light

Till o'er the sleeping sea-god now he
stood;

And if the white-foot maids had stirred
his blood

As he passed by, now other thoughts had
place 475

Within his heart when he beheld that
face.

"For Nereus now he knew, who knows
all things;

And to himself he said, 'If I prevail,
Better than by some god-wrought eagle-
wings

Shall I be holpen.' Then he cried out:
'Hail, 480

O Nereus! lord of shifting hill and dale!
Arise and wrestle; I am Hercules!

Not soon now shalt thou meet the ridgy
seas.'

"And mightily he cast himself on him;
And Nereus cried out shrilly; and
straightway 485

That sleeping crowd, fair maid with half-
hid limb,

Strange man and green-haired beast, made
no delay,

But glided down into the billows grey,
And, by the lovely sea embraced, were
gone;

While they two wrestled on the sea strand
lone. 490

"Soon found the sea-god that his bodily
might

Was nought in dealing with Jove's dear
one there;

And soon he 'gan to use his magic
sleight:

Into a lithe leopard, and a hugging bear,
He turned him; then the smallest fowl of
air 495

The straining arms of Hercules must
hold,

And then a mud-born wriggling eel and
cold.

"Then as the firm hands mastered this,
forth brake

A sudden rush of waters all around,
Blinding and choking; then a thin green
snake 500

With golden eyes; then o'er the shell-
strewn ground

Forth stole a fly the least that may be
found;

Then earth and heaven seemed wrapped in
one huge flame, —
But from the midst thereof a voice there
came:

“Kinsman and stout-heart, thou hast
won the day, 505
Nor to my grief: what wouldst thou have
of me?”
And therewith to an old man small and
grey
Faded the roaring flame, — who wearily
Sat down upon the sand and said: ‘Let be!
I know thy tale; worthy of help thou
art: 510
Come now, a short way hence will there
depart

“A ship of Tyre for the warm south-
ern seas, —
Come we aboard; according to my will
Her way shall be.’ Then up rose Her-
cules,
Merry of face, though hot and panting
still; 515
But the fair summer day his heart did fill
With all delight; and so forth went the
twain,
And found those men desirous of all gain.

“Ah, for these gainful men — somewhat
indeed
Their sails are rent, their bark beat; kin
and friend 520
Are wearying for them: yet a friend in
need
They yet shall gain, if at their journey’s
end,
Upon the last ness where the wild goats
wend
To lick the salt-washed stones, a house
they raise
Bedight with gold in kindly Nereus’
praise.” 525

Breathless they waited for these latest
words,
That like the soft wind of the gathering
night

Were grown to be: about the mast flew
birds
Making their moan, hovering long-winged
and white;
And now before their straining anxious
sight 530
The old man faded out into the air,
And from his place flew forth a sea-
mew fair.

Then to the Mighty Man, Alcmena’s
son,
With yearning hearts they turned till he
should speak,
And he spake softly: “Nought ill have ye
done 535
In helping me to find what I did seek;
The world made better by me knows if
weak
My hand and heart are: but now, light
the fire
Upon the prow and worship the grey
sire.”

So did they; and such gifts as there
they had 540
Gave unto Nereus; yea, and sooth to say,
Amid the tumult of their hearts made
glad,
Had honored Hercules in e’en such way;
But he laughed out amid them, and said:
“Nay,
Not yet the end is come; nor have I
yet 545
Bowed down before vain longing and re-
gret.

“It may be — who shall tell, — when
I go back
There whence I came, and looking down
behold
The place that my once eager heart shall
lack,
And all my dead desires a-lying cold, — 550
But I may have the might then to enfold
The hopes of brave men in my heart? —
But long
Life lies before first with its change and
wrought.”

So, fair along the watery ways they
 sped
 In happy wise, nor failed of their re-
 turn; 555
 Nor failed in ancient Tyre the ways to
 tread,
 Teaching their tale to whomsoe'er would
 learn;
 Nor failed at last the flesh of beasts to
 burn
 In Nereus' house, turned toward the
 bright day's end
 On the last ness, round which the wild
 goats wend. 560

LOVE IS ENOUGH! THOUGH THE WORLD BE A-WANING

(*Song from Love is Enough, 1871-72*)

Love is enough! Though the world be a-
 waning,
 And the woods have no voice but the voice
 of complaining; 40
 Though the sky be too dark for dim
 eyes to discover
 The gold-cups and daisies fair blooming
 thereunder;
 Though the hills be held shadows, and the
 sea a dark wonder,
 And this day draw a veil over all deeds
 passed over:
 Yet their hands shall not tremble, their
 feet shall not falter, — 45
 The void shall not weary, the fear shall
 not alter
 These lips and these eyes of the loved
 and the lover.

THE VOICE OF TOIL (1884)

I heard men saying, Leave hope and
 praying,
 All days shall be as all have been:
 Today and tomorrow bring fear and sor-
 row,
 The never ending toil between.

When Earth was younger mid toil and
 hunger, 5
 In hope we strove, and our hands were
 strong;
 Then great men led us, with words they
 fed us,
 And bade us right the earthly wrong.

Go read in story their deeds and glory,
 Their names amidst the nameless dead; 10
 Turn then from lying to us slow-dying
 In that good world to which they led;

Where fast and faster our iron master,
 The thing we made, for ever drives,
 Bids us grind treasure and fashion pleas-
 ure 15
 For other hopes and other lives;

Where home is a hovel, and dull we
 grovel,
 Forgetting that the world is fair;
 Where no babe we cherish, lest its very
 soul perish;
 Where mirth is crime, and love a snare. 20

Who now shall lead us, what god shall
 heed us
 As we lie in the hell our hands have won?
 For us are no rulers but fools and be-
 foolers, —
 The great are fallen, the wise men gone.

I heard men saying, Leave tears and pray-
 ing, 25
 The sharp knife heedeth not the sheep:
 Are we not stronger than the rich and the
 wronger,
 When day breaks over dreams and sleep?

Come, shoulder to shoulder, ere the world
 grows older!
 Help lies in nought but thee and me: 30
 Hope is before us, the long years that
 bore us
 Bore leaders more than men may be.

Let dead hearts tarry, and trade, and marry,
And trembling nurse their dreams of mirth,
While we, the living, our lives are giving 35
To bring the bright new world to birth.

Come, shoulder to shoulder, ere earth
grows older!
The cause spreads over land and sea:
Now the world shaketh, and fear
awaketh,
And joy at last for thee and me. 40

GEORGE MEREDITH
(1828-1909)

LOVE IN THE VALLEY
(1851, 1878)

Under yonder beech-tree single on the
green-sward,
Couched with her arms behind her
golden head,
Knees and tresses folded to slip and ripple
idly,
Lies my young love sleeping in the
shade.
Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath
her, 5
Press her parting lips as her waist I
gather slow,
Waking in amazement she could not but
embrace me:
Then would she hold me and never let
me go?

Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the
swallow,
Swift as the swallow along the river's
light 10
Circling the surface to meet his mirrored
winglets,
Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her
flight.

Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the
pine-tops,
Wayward as the swallow overhead at
set of sun,
She whom I love is hard to catch and
conquer, — 15
Hard, but oh the glory of the winning,
were she won!

When her mother tends her before the
laughing mirror,
Tying up her laces, looping up her
hair, —
Often she thinks, were this wild thing
wedded,
More love should I have, and much less
care. 20
When her mother tends her before the
lighted mirror,
Loosening her laces, combing down her
curls, —
Often she thinks, were this wild thing
wedded,
I should miss but one for many boys and
girls.

Heartless she is as the shadow in the
meadows 25
Flying to the hills on a blue and breezy
noon!
No, — she is athirst and drinking up her
wonder:
Earth to her is young as the slip of the
new moon.
Deals she an unkindness, 'tis but her rapid
measure,
Even as in a dance; and her smile can
heal no less: 30
Like the swinging May-cloud that pelts
the flowers with hailstones
Off a sunny border, she was made to
bruise and bless.

Lovely are the curves of the white owl
sweeping
Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.
Lone on the fir-branch, his rattle-note un-
varied, 35
Brooding o'er the gloom, spins the
brown eve-jar.

Darker grows the valley, more and more
forgetting:

So were it with me if forgetting could
be willed —

Tell the grassy hollow that holds the bub-
bling well-spring,

Tell it to forget the source that keeps it
filled. 40

Stepping down the hill with her fair com-
panions,

Arm in arm, all against the raying
West,

Boldly she sings, to the merry tune she
marches,

Brave in her shape, and sweeter un-
possessed.

Sweeter, for she is what my heart first
awaking 45

Whispered the world was: morning
light is she.

Love that so desires would fain keep her
changeless;

Fain would fling the net, — and fain
have her free.

Happy happy time, when the white star
hovers

Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy
dew, 50

Near the face of dawn, that draws
athwart the darkness,

Threading it with color, as yewberries
the yew.

Thicker crowd the shades while the grave
East deepens

Glowing; and with crimson a long cloud
swells.

Maiden still the morn is; and strange she
is, and secret: 55

Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as
cold sea-shells.

Sunrays, leaning on our southern hills and
lighting

Wild cloud-mountains that drag the
hills along, —

Oft ends the day of your shifting brilliant
laughter

Chill as a dull face frowning on a
song. 60

Ay, but shows the South-west a ripple-
feathered bosom

Blown to silver while the clouds are
shaken and ascend,

Scaling the mid-heavens as they stream, —
there comes a sunset

Rich, deep like love in beauty without
end.

When at dawn she sighs, and like an in-
fant to the window 65

Turns grave eyes craving light, released
from dreams, —

Beautiful she looks, like a white water-
lily,

Bursting out of bud in havens of the
streams.

When from bed she rises clothed from
neck to ankle

In her long nightgown sweet as boughs
of May, — 70

Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden-lily,
Pure from the night, and splendid for
the day.

Mother of the dews, dark eye-lashed twi-
light,

Low-lidded twilight, o'er the valley's
brim, —

Rounding on thy breast sings the dew-
delighted skylark, 75

Clear as though the dewdrops had their
voice in him.

Hidden where the rose-flush drinks the
rayless planet,

Fountain-full he pours the spraying
fountain-showers. —

Let me hear her laughter: I would have
her ever

Cool as dew in twilight, the lark above
the flowers. 80

All the girls are out with their baskets
for the primrose;

Up lanes, woods through, they troop in
joyful bands.

My sweet leads: she knows not why, but
now she loiters,

Eyes the bent anemones, and hangs her
hands.

Such a look will tell that the violets are
peeping, 85

Coming the rose; and unaware a cry
Springs in her bosom for odors and for
color,

Covert and the nightingale, — she knows
not why.

Kerchiefed head and chin she darts be-
tween her tulips,

Streaming like a willow gray in arrowy
rain: 90

Some bend beaten cheek to gravel, and
their angel

She will be; she lifts them, and on she
speeds again. —

Black the driving raincloud breasts the
iron gate-way:

She is forth to cheer a neighbor lacking
mirth.

So, when sky and grass met rolling dumb
for thunder, 95

Saw I once a white dove, sole light of
earth.

Prim little scholars are the flowers of her
garden,

Trained to stand in rows, and asking
if they please.

I might love them well but for loving
more the wild ones:

O my wild ones! they tell me more than
these. 100

You, my wild one, you tell of honied field-
rose,

Violet, blushing eglantine, in life; and
even as they,

They, by the wayside are earnest of your
goodness, —

You are of life's, on the banks that line
the way.

Peering at her chamber the white crowns
the red rose, 105

Jasmine winds the porch with stars two
and three.

Parted is the window; she sleeps: the
starry jasmine

Breathes a falling breath that carries
thoughts of me.

Sweeter unpossessed, have I said of her
my sweetest?

Not while she sleeps: while she sleeps
the jasmine breathes, 110

Luring her to love: she sleeps; the starry
jasmine

Bears me to her pillow under white
rose-wreaths.

Yellow with birdfoot-trefoil are the grass-
glades,

Yellow with cinquefoil of the dew-gray
leaf,

Yellow with stonecrop; the moss-mounds
are yellow; 115

Blue-necked the wheat sways, yellowing
to the sheaf.

Green-yellow, bursts from the copse the
laughing yaffle;

Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade
and shine.

Earth in her heart laughs, looking at the
heavens,

Thinking of the harvest: I look, and
think of mine. 120

This I may know: her dressing and un-
dressing

Such a change of light shows as when
the skies in sport

Shift from cloud to moonlight; or edging
over thunder

Slips a ray of sun; or sweeping into
port

White sails furl; or on the ocean
borders 125

White sails lean along the waves leaping
green.

Visions of her shower before me; but
from eyesight

Guarded she would be like the sun,
were she seen.

Front door and back of the mossed old
farmhouse

Open with the morn; and in a breezy
link 130

Freshly sparkles garden to stripe-shadowed
orchard,

Green across a rill where on sand the
minnows wink.

Busy in the grass the early sun of sum-
mer

Swarms; and the blackbird's mellow
fluting notes

Call my darling up with round and
roguish challenge, — 135

Quaintest, richest carol of all the sing-
ing throats!

Cool was the woodside; cool as her white
dairy

Keeping sweet the cream-pan; and there
the boys from school,

Cricketing below, rushed brown and red
with sunshine, —

O the dark translucence of the deep-
eyed cool! 140

Spying from the farm, herself she fetched
a pitcher

Full of milk, and tilted for each in turn
the beak.

Then a little fellow, mouth up and on
tiptoe,

Said, "I will kiss you": she laughed and
leaned her cheek.

Doves of the fir-wood walling high our
red roof 145

Through the long noon coo, crooning
through the coo.

Loose droop the leaves, and down the
sleepy roadway

Sometimes pipes a chaffinch; loose
droops the blue.

Cows flap a slow tail, knee-deep in the
river,

Breathless, given up to sun and gnat and
fly. — 150

Nowhere is she seen; and if I see her no-
where,

Lightning may come, straight rains and
tiger sky.

O the golden sheaf, the rustling treasure-
armful!

O the nutbrown tresses nodding inter-
laced!

O the treasure-tresses one another over 155
Nodding! O the girdle slack about the
waist!

Slain are the poppies that shot their ran-
dom scarlet

Quick amid the wheatears: wound about
the waist,

Gathered, see these brides of Earth one
blush of ripeness!

O the nutbrown tresses nodding inter-
laced! 160

Large and smoky red the sun's cold disk
drops,

Clipped by naked hills, on violet-shaded
snow:

Eastward, large and still, lights up a
bower of moonrise,

Whence at her leisure steps the moon
aglow.

Nightlong on black print-branches our
beech-tree 165

Gazes in this whiteness: nightlong could
I.

Here may life on death, or death on life,
be painted. —

Let me clasp her soul to know she can-
not die!

Gossips count her faults; they scour a nar-
row chamber

Where there is no window, read not
heaven or her. 170

"When she was a tiny," one aged woman
quavers,

Plucks at my heart and leads me by the
ear.

Faults she had once, as she learned to run
and tumbled:

Faults of feature some see, beauty not
complete.

Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes
holy 175

Earth and air, may have faults from
head to feet.

Hither she comes; she comes to me; she
lingers,

Deepens her brown eyebrows, while in
new surprise

High rise the lashes in wonder of a
stranger, —

Yet am I the light and living of her
eyes. 180

Something friends have told her fills her
heart to brimming,

Nets her in her blushes, and wounds
her, and tames. —

Sure of her haven, O like a dove alight-
ing,

Arms up, she dropped: our souls were
in our names.

Soon will she lie like a white-frost sun-
rise. 185

Yellow oats and brown wheat, barley
pale as rye,

Long since your sheaves have yielded to
the thresher,

Felt the girdle loosened, seen the tresses
fly.

Soon will she lie like a blood-red sunset.
Swift with the tomorrow, green-winged

Spring! 190

Sing from the South-west, bring her back
the truants, —

Nightingale and swallow, song and dip-
ping wing.

Soft new beech-leaves, — up to beamy
April

Spreading bough on bough a primrose
mountain, — you,

Lucid in the moon, raise lilies to the sky-
fields, 195

Youngest green transfused in silver
shining through:

Fairer than the lily, than the wild white
cherry;

Fair as in image my seraph love appears
Borne to me by dreams when dawn is at
my eyelids;

Fair as in the flesh she swims to me on
tears. 200

Could I find a place to be alone with
heaven,

I would speak my heart out: heaven is
my need.

Every woodland tree is flushing like the
dogwood,

Flashing like the whitebeam, swaying
like the reed, —

Flushing like the dogwood crimson in
October; 205

Streaming like the flag-reed South-west
blown;

Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted
whitebeam:

All seem to know what is for heaven
alone.

JUGGLING JERRY

(1859)

Pitch here the tent, while the old horse
grazes:

By the old hedge-side we'll halt a stage.

It's nigh my last above the daisies:

My next leaf'll be man's blank page.

Yes, my old girl! and it's no use crying: 5

Juggler, constable, king, must bow.

One that outjuggles all's been spying

Long to have me, and he has me now.

We've traveled times to this old common:

Often we've hung our pots in the
gorse. 10

We've had a stirring life, old woman!

You, and I, and the old gray horse.

Races, and fairs, and royal occasions,

Found us coming to their call:

Now they'll miss us at our stations: 15

There's a Juggler outjuggles all!

Up goes the lark, as if all were jolly!
Over the duck-pond the willow shakes.
Easy to think that grieving's folly,

When the hand's firm as driven
stakes! 20

Ay! when we're strong, and braced, and
manful,

Life's a sweet fiddle: but we're a batch
Born to become the Great Juggler's
han'ful:

Balls he shies up, and is safe to catch.

Here's where the lads of the village
cricket, — 25

I was a lad not wide from here:
Couldn't I whip off the bail from the
wicket?

Like an old world those days appear!
Donkey, sheep, geese, and thatched ale-
house, — I know 'em!

They are old friends of my halts, and
seem, 30

Somehow, as if kind thanks I owe 'em:
Juggling don't hinder the heart's esteem.

Juggling's no sin, for we must have vic-
tual:

Nature allows us to bait for the fool.
Holding one's own makes us juggle no
little; 35

But, to increase it, hard juggling's the
rule.

You that are sneering at my profession,
Haven't you juggled a vast amount?

There's the Prime Minister, in one Ses-
sion,

Juggles more games than my sins'll
count. 40

I've murdered insects with mock thunder:
Conscience, for that, in men don't quail.

I've made bread from the bump of
wonder:

That's my business, and there's my tale.
Fashion and rank all praised the pro-
fessor; 45

Ay! and I've had my smile from the
Queen:

Bravo, Jerry! she meant, — God bless
her!

Ain't this a sermon on that scene?

I've studied men from my topsy-turvy
Close, and, I reckon, rather true. 50

Some are fine fellows; some, right scurvy;
Most, a dash between the two.

But it's a woman, old girl, that makes me
Think more kindly of the race;

And it's a woman, old girl, that shakes
me 55

When the Great Juggler I must face.

We two were married, due and legal:
Honest we've lived since we've been one.

Lord! I could then jump like an eagle:
You danced bright as a bit o' the sun. 60

Birds in a May-bush we were! right
merry!

All night we kissed — we juggled all day.
Joy was the heart of Juggling Jerry!

Now from his old girl he's juggled
away.

It's past parsons to console us; 65
No, nor no doctor fetch for me:

I can die without my bolus;
Two of a trade, lass, never agree!

Parson and Doctor! — don't they love
rarely,

Fighting the devil in other men's
fields! 70

Stand up yourself and match him fairly:
Then see how the rascal yields!

I, lass, have lived no gipsy, flaunting
Finery while his poor helpmate grubs:

Coin I've stored, and you won't be want-
ing; 75

You sha'n't beg from the troughs and
tubs.

Nobly you've stuck to me, though in his
kitchen

Many a Marquis would hail you Cook!
Palaces you could have ruled and grown
rich in,

But your old Jerry you never for-
sook. 80

Hand up the chirper! ripe ale winks in it:
 Let's have comfort and be at peace—
 Once a stout draught made me light as a
 linnet—

Cheer up! the Lord must have his lease.
 May be—for none see in that black hol-
 low— 85

It's just a place where we're held in
 pawn,

And, when the Great Juggler makes as to
 swallow,

It's just the sword-trick—I ain't quite
 gone.

Yonder came smells of the gorse, so nutty,
 Gold-like, and warm: it's the prime of
 May. 90

Better than mortar, brick, and putty,
 Is God's house on a blowing day.

Lean me more up the mound; now I
 feel it:

All the old heath-smells! Ain't it
 strange?

There's the world laughing, as if to con-
 ceal it, 95

But He's by us, juggling the change.

I mind it well, by the sea-beach lying,
 Once—it's long gone—when two gulls
 we beheld,

Which, as the moon got up, were flying
 Down a big wave that sparked and
 swelled. 100

Crack, went a gun: one fell; the second
 Wheeled round him twice, and was off
 for new luck,—

There in the dark her white wing
 beckoned:

Drop me a kiss—I'm the bird dead-
 struck!

From ODE TO THE SPIRIT OF
 EARTH IN AUTUMN
 (1862)

Great Mother Nature! teach me, like
 thee,

To kiss the season and shun regrets.

And am I more than the mother who bore,

Mock me not with thy harmony!

Teach me to blot regrets, 145

Great Mother! me inspire

With faith that forward sets

But feeds the living fire;

Faith that never frets

For vagueness in the form. 150

In life, O keep me warm!

For, what is human grief?

And what do men desire?

Teach me to feel myself the tree,

And not the withered leaf: 155

Fixed am I, and await the dark to-be!

And O, green bounteous Earth!

Bacchante Mother! stern to those

Who live not in thy heart of mirth:

Death shall I shrink from, loving thee? 160

Into the breast that gives the rose,

Shall I with shuddering fall?

Earth, the mother of all,

Moves on her stedfast way,

Gathering, flinging, sowing. 165

Mortals, we live in her day,

She in her children is growing.

She can lead us, only she,

Unto God's footstool, whither she
 reaches:

Loved, enjoyed, her gifts must be, 170

Reverenced the truths she teaches,

Ere a man may hope that he

Ever can attain the glee

Of things without a destiny!

She knows not loss: 175

She feels but her need,

Who the winged seed

With the leaf doth toss.

And may not men to this attain?

That the joy of motion, the rapture of
 being, 180

Shall throw strong light when our season
 is fleeing,

Nor quicken aged blood in vain,

At the gates of the vault, on the verge of
the plain?

Life thoroughly lived is a fact in the
brain,

While eyes are left for seeing. 185

Behold, in yon stripped Autumn, shivering
grey,

Earth knows no desolation:

She smells regeneration

In the moist breath of decay.

"I PLAY FOR SEASONS"

(*From Modern Love*, 1862: section XIII)

"I play for Seasons; not Eternities!"

Says Nature, laughing on her way. "So
must

All those whose stake is nothing more
than dust!"

And lo, she wins, and of her harmonies
She is full sure! Upon her dying rose 5

She drops a look of fondness, and goes by,
Scarce any retrospection in her eye;

For she the laws of growth most deeply
knows,

Whose hands bear, here, a seed-bag, —
there, an urn.

Pledged she herself to aught, 'twould
mark her end! 10

This lesson of our only visible friend
Can we not teach our foolish hearts to
learn?

Yes! yes! — but, oh, our human rose is
fair

Surpassingly! Lose calmly Love's great
bliss, —

When the renewed forever of a kiss 15

Whirls life within the shower of loosened
hair?

DIRGE IN WOODS

(1870)

A wind sways the pines;

And below,

Not a breath of wild air —

Still as the mosses that glow

On the flooring and over the lines 5
Of the roots here and there.

The pine-tree drops its dead;

They are quiet, as under the sea.

Overhead, overhead

Rushes life in a race, 10

As the clouds the clouds chase!

And we go,

And we drop like the fruits of the tree,

Even we,

Even so. 15

THE LARK ASCENDING

(1881)

He rises and begins to round;

He drops the silver chain of sound,

Of many links without a break,

In chirrup, whistle, slur, and shake, —

All interwoven and spreading wide, 5

Like water-dimples down a tide

Where ripple ripple overcurls

And eddy into eddy whirls;

A press of hurried notes that run

So fleet they scarce are more than one. 10

Yet changingly the trills repeat,

And linger ringing while they fleet, —

Sweet to the quick o' the ear; and dear

To her beyond the handmaid ear,

Who sits beside our inner springs, 15

Too often dry for this he brings,

Which seems the very jet of earth

At sight of sun, her music's mirth;

As up he wings the spiral stair,

A song of light, and pierces air 20

With fountain ardor, fountain play,

To reach the shining tops of day,

And drink, in everything discerned,

An ecstasy to music turned, —

Impelled by what his happy bill 25

Disperses; drinking, showering still,

Unthinking save that he may give

His voice the outlet, there to live

Renewed in endless notes of glee,

So thirsty of his voice is he: 30

For all to hear and all to know

That he is joy, awake, aglow, —

The tumult of the heart to hear
 Through pureness filtered crystal-clear, —
 And know the pleasure sprinkled bright 35
 By simple singing of delight;
 Shrill, irreflective, unrestrained,
 Rapt, ringing, on the jet sustained
 Without a break, without a fall,
 Sweet-silvery, sheer lyrical, 40
 Perennial, quavering up the chord
 Like myriad dews of sunny sward
 That trembling into fulness shine,
 And sparkle dropping argentine:
 Such wooing as the ear receives, 45
 From zephyr caught in choric leaves
 Of aspens when their chattering net
 Is flushed to white with shivers wet;
 And such the water-spirit's chime
 On mountain heights in morning's
 prime, 50
 Too freshly sweet to seem excess,
 Too animate to need a stress;
 But wider over many heads
 The starry voice ascending spreads,
 Awakening, as it waxes thin, 55
 The best in us to him akin;
 And every face to watch him raised
 Puts on the light of children praised, —
 So rich our human pleasure ripens
 When sweetness on sincereness pipes; 60
 Though naught be promised from the
 seas, —
 But only a soft-ruffling breeze
 Sweep glittering on a still content,
 Serenity in ravishment.

For, singing till his heaven fills, 65
 'Tis love of earth that he instils;
 And ever winging up and up,
 Our valley is his golden cup,
 And he the wine which overflows
 To lift us with him as he goes, — 70
 But not from earth is he divorced,
 He joyfully to fly enforced.
 The woods and brooks, the sheep and
 kine,
 He is, — the hills, the human line,
 The meadows green, the fallows brown, 75
 The dreams of labor in the town.
 He sings the sap, the quickened veins;

The wedding song of sun and rains
 He is, — the dance of children, thanks
 Of sowers, shout of primrose-banks, 80
 And eye of violets while they breathe.
 All these the circling song will wreath;
 And you shall hear the herb and tree,
 The better heart of men shall see,
 Shall feel celestially, — as long 85
 As you crave nothing save the song.

Was never voice of ours could say
 Our inmost in the sweetest way,
 Like yonder voice aloft, and link
 All hearers in the song they drink. 90
 Our wisdom speaks from failing blood,
 Our passion is too full in flood:
 We want the key of his wild note
 Of truthful in a tuneful throat,
 The song seraphically free 95
 Of taint of personality, —
 So pure that it salutes the suns
 The voice of one for millions,
 In whom the millions rejoice
 For giving their one spirit voice. 100

Yet men have we, whom we revere,
 Now names, — and men still housing
 here, —

Whose lives, by many a battle-dint
 Defaced, and grinding wheels on flint,
 Yield substance, though they sing not,
 sweet 105

For song, our highest heaven, to greet:
 Whom heavenly singing gives us new,
 Ensppheres them brilliant in our blue,
 From firmest base to farthest leap,
 Because their love of Earth is deep. 110
 And they are warriors in accord
 With life to serve and pass reward, —
 So touching purest, and so heard
 In the brain's reflex of yon bird.
 Wherefore their soul in me, — or mine, 115
 Through self-forgetfulness divine,
 In them, — that song aloft maintains,
 To fill the sky and thrill the plains
 With showerings drawn from human
 stores;
 As he to silence nearer soars, 120

Extends the world at wings and dome,
 More spacious making more our home;
 Till lost on his aerial rings
 In light,—and then the fancy sings.

EARTH AND MAN

(1883)

On her great venture, Man,
 Earth gazes while her fingers dint the
 breast
 Which is his well of strength, his home of
 rest,
 And fair to scan.

More aid than that embrace,
 That nourishment, she cannot give: his
 heart
 Involves his fate; and she who urged the
 start
 Abides the race.

For he is in the lists
 Contentious with the elements, whose
 dower 10
 First sprang him; for swift vultures to
 devour
 If he desists.

His breath of instant thirst
 Is warning of a creature matched with
 strife,
 To meet it as a bride, or let fall life 15
 On life's accursed.

No longer forth he bounds
 The lusty animal, afield to roam,
 But peering in Earth's entrails, where the
 gnome
 Strange themes propounds. 20

By hunger sharply sped
 To grasp at weapons ere he learns their
 use,
 In each new ring he bears a giant's thews,
 An infant's head.

And ever that old task 25
 Of reading what he is and whence he
 came,
 Whither to go, finds wilder letters flame
 Across her mask.

She hears his wailful prayer,
 When now to the Invisible he raves 30
 To rend him from her, now of his mother
 craves
 Her calm, her care.

The thing that shudders most
 Within him is the burden of his cry.
 Seen of his dread, she is to his blank
 eye 35
 The eyeless Ghost.

Or sometimes she will seem
 Heavenly; but her blush, soon wearing
 white,
 Veils like a gorsebush in a web of blight,
 With gold-buds dim. 40

Once worshipped Prime of Powers,
 She still was the Implacable: as a beast,
 She struck him down and dragged him
 from the feast
 She crowned with flowers.

Her pomp of glorious hues, 45
 Her revelries of ripeness, her kind smile,
 Her songs, her peeping faces, lure awhile
 With symbol-clues.

The mystery she holds
 For him, inveterately he strains to see; 50
 And sight of his obtuseness is the key
 Among those folds.

He may entreat, aspire,
 He may despair, and she has never heed.
 She drinking his warm sweat will soothe
 his need, 55
 Not his desire.

She prompts him to rejoice,
Yet scares him on the threshold with the
shroud.

He deems her cherishing of her best-
endowed

A wanton's choice. 60

Albeit thereof he has found
Firm roadway between lustfulness and
pain;

Has half transferred the battle to his
brain,

From bloody ground;

He will not read her good, 65
Or wise, but with the passion Self ob-
scures;

Through that old devil of the thousand
lures,

Through that dense hood:

Through terror, through distrust;
The greed to touch, to view, to have, to
live: 70

Through all that makes of him a sensitive
Abhorring dust.

Behold his wormy home!
And he the wind-whipped, anywhither
wave

Crazily tumbled on a shingle-grave 75
To waste in foam.

Therefore the wretch inclines
Afresh to the Invisible, — who, he saith,
Can raise him high, — with vows of living
faith

For little signs. 80

Some signs he must demand,
Some proofs of slaughtered nature, —
some prized few,
To satisfy the senses it is true.
And in his hand,

This miracle which saves 85
Himself, himself doth from extinction
clutch,

By virtue of his worth, contrasting much
With brutes and knaves!

From dust, of him abhorred,
He would be snatched by Grace discover-
ing worth: 90

"Sever me from the hollowness of earth!
Me take, dear Lord!"

She hears him. Him she owes,
For half her loveliness, a love well won
By work that lights the shapeless and the
dun, 95

Their common foes.

He builds the soaring spires,
That sing his soul in stone: of her he
draws, —

Though blind to her, — by spelling at her
laws,

Her purest fires. 100

Through him hath she exchanged,
For the gold harvest-robcs, the mural
crown,

Her haggard quarry-features and thick
frown

Where monsters ranged.

And order, high discourse, 105
And decency, than which is life less dear,
She has of him: the lyre of language
clear,

Love's tongue and source.

She hears him, and can hear
With glory in his gains by work
achieved; 110

With grief for grief that is the unper-
ceived

In her so near.

If he aloft for aid
Imploring storms, her essence is the spur:
His cry to heaven is a cry to her 115
He would evade.

Not elsewhere can he tend.
Those are her rules which bid him wash
foul sins;

Those, her revulsions from the skull that
grins

To ape his end. 120

And her desires are those
 For happiness, for lastingness, for light.
 'Tis she who kindles in his haunting night
 The hoped dawn-rose.

Fair fountains of the dark 125
 Daily she waves him, that his inner dream
 May clasp amid the glooms a springing
 beam,
 A quivering lark:

This life and her to know
 For Spirit; with awakenedness of glee 130
 To feel stern joy her origin, — not he
 The child of woe.

But that the senses still
 Usurp the station of their issue, mind,
 He would have burst the chrysalis of the
 blind — 135
 As yet he will;

As yet he will, she prays,
 Yet will when his distempered devil of
 Self; —
 The glutton for her fruits, the wily elf
 In shifting rays, 140

That captain of the scorned,
 The coveter of life in soul and shell,
 The fratricide, the thief, the infidel,
 The hoofed and horned, —

He singularly doomed 145
 To what he execrates and writhes to
 shun; —
 When fire has passed him vapor to the
 sun,
 And sun relumed,

Then shall the horrid pall
 Be lifted, and a spirit nigh divine, 150
 "Live in thy offspring as I live in mine,"
 Will hear her call.

Whence looks he on a land
 Whereon his labor is a carven page;
 And forth from heritage to heritage 155
 Nought writ on sand.

His fables of the Above,
 And his gapped readings of the crown and
 sword,
 The hell detested and the heaven adored,
 The hate, the love, 160

The bright wing, the black hoof, —
 He shall peruse, from Reason not dis-
 joined,
 And never unfaith clamoring to be coined
 To faith by proof.

She her just Lord may view, — 165
 Not he, her creature, till his soul has
 yearned,
 With all her gifts, to reach the light dis-
 cerned
 Her spirit through.

Then in him time shall run
 As in the hour that to young sunlight
 crows; 170
 And, "If thou hast good faith it can
 repose,"
 She tells her son.

Meanwhile on him, her chief
 Expression, her great word of life, looks
 she;
 Twi-minded of him, as the waxing
 tree, 175
 Or dated leaf.

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

(1883)

On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
 Tired of his dark dominion, swung the
 fiend
 Above the rolling ball, in cloud part
 screened,
 Where sinners hugged their spectre of re-
 pose.
 Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were
 those. 5
 And now upon his western wing he leaned,
 Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands
 careened,
 Now the black planet shadowed Arctic
 snows.

Soaring through wider zones that pricked
 his scars
 With memory of the old revolt from
 Awe, 10
 He reached a middle height, and at the
 stars,
 Which are the brain of heaven, he looked,
 and sank:
 Around the ancient track marched, rank
 on rank,
 The army of unalterable law.

SENSE AND SPIRIT

(1883)

The senses loving Earth, or well or ill,
 Ravel yet more the riddle of our lot.
 The mind is in their trammels, and lights
 not
 By trimming fear-bred tales; nor does the
 will
 To find in nature things which less may
 chill 5
 An ardor that desires, unknowing what.
 Till we conceive her living we go dis-
 traught,
 At best but circle-windsails of a mill.
 Seeing she lives, and of her joy of life
 Creatively has given us blood and
 breath 10
 For endless war and never wound un-
 healed,
 The gloomy Wherefore of our battle-
 field
 Solves in the Spirit, wrought of her
 through strife
 To read her own, and trust her down to
 death.

EARTH'S SECRET

(1883)

Not solitarily in fields we find
 Earth's secret open, though one page is
 there,—
 Her plainest, such as children spell, and
 share

With bird and beast,—raised letters for
 the blind.
 Not where the troubled passions toss the
 mind, 5
 In turbid cities, can the key be bare.
 It hangs for those who hither thither
 fare,
 Close interthreading nature with our
 kind.
 They, hearing History speak, of what men
 were,
 And have become, are wise. The gain is
 great 10
 In vision and solidity; it lives.
 Yet at a thought of life apart from her,
 Solidity and vision lose their state;
 For Earth, that gives the milk, the spirit
 gives.

THE SPIRIT OF SHAKESPEARE

(1883)

Thy greatest knew thee, Mother Earth;
 unsoured
 He knew thy sons. He probed from hell
 to hell
 Of human passions, but of love deflowered
 His wisdom was not, for he knew thee
 well.
 Thence came the honeyed corner at his
 lips, 5
 The conquering smile wherein his spirit
 sails
 Calm as the God who the white sea-wave
 whips,—
 Yet full of speech and intershifting tales,
 Close mirrors of us. Thence had he the
 laugh
 We feel is thine,—broad as ten thousand
 beeves 10
 At pasture! Thence thy songs,—that
 winnow chaff
 From grain, bid sick Philosophy's last
 leaves
 Whirl, if they have no response,—they
 enforced
 To fatten Earth when from her soul
 divorced.

(continued)

How smiles he at a generation ranked 15
 In gloomy noddings over life! They pass.
 Not he to feed upon a breast unthanked,
 Or eye a beauteous face in a cracked
 glass.

But he can spy that little twist of brain
 Which moved some weighty leader of the
 blind, — 20

Unwitting 'twas the goad of personal
 pain, —

To view in curst eclipse our Mother's
 mind,

And show us of some rigid harridan
 The wretched bondmen till the end of
 time.

O lived the Master now to paint us
 Man, 25

That little twist of brain would ring a
 chime

Of whence it came and what it caused,
 to start

Thunders of laughter, clearing air and
 heart.

AN ORSON OF THE MUSE

(1883)

Her son, — albeit the Muse's livery
 And measured courtly paces rouse his
 taunts:

Naked and hairy in his savage haunts,
 To Nature only will he bend the knee;
 Spouting the founts of her distillery 5
 Like rough rock-sources; and his woes
 and wants,

Being Nature's, civil limitation daunts
 His utterance never; the nymphs blush,
 not he.

Him, when he blows of Earth, and Man,
 and Fate,

The Muse will hearken to with graver
 ear 10

Than many of her train can waken: him
 Would fain have taught what fruitful
 things and dear

Must sink beneath the tidewaves, of their
 weight,

If in no vessel built for sea they swim.

INTERNAL HARMONY

(1883)

Assured of worthiness we do not dread
 Competitors; we rather give them hail
 And greeting in the lists where we may
 fail —

Must, if we bear an aim beyond the
 head!

My betters are my masters: purely fed 5
 By their sustainment I likewise shall
 scale

Some rocky steps between the mount and
 vale;

Meanwhile the mark I have, and I, will
 wed.

So that I draw the breath of finer air,
 Station is nought, nor footways laurel-
 strewn, 10

Nor rivals tightly belted for the race.

Good speed to them! My place is here
 or there;

My pride is that among them I have
 place:

And thus I keep this instrument in tune.

THE WORLD'S ADVANCE

(1883)

Judge mildly the tasked world; and dis-
 incline

To brand it, for it bears a heavy pack.
 You have perchance observed the ineb-
 riate's track

At night when he has quitted the inn-
 sign:

He plays diversions on the homeward
 line, — 5

Still that way bent, albeit his legs are
 slack:

A hedge may take him, but he turns not
 back:

Nor turns this burdened world, of curving
 spine.

"Spiral," the memorable Lady terms
 Our mind's ascent: our world's advance
 presents 10

That figure on a flat, — the way of
 worms.

Cherish the promise of its good intents;
And warn it, not one instinct to efface
Ere Reason ripens for the vacant place.

THE DISCIPLINE OF WISDOM

(1883)

Rich labor is the struggle to be wise,
While we make sure the struggle cannot
cease:

Else better were it in some bower of
peace

Slothful to swing, contending with the
flies.

You point at Wisdom fixed on lofty
skies, 5

As mid barbarian hordes a sculptured
Greece—

She falls. To live and shine, she grows
her fleece,

Is shorn, and rubs with follies and with
lies.

So following her, your hewing may attain
The right to speak unto the mute, and
shun 10

That sly temptation of the illumined
brain,

Deliveries oracular, self-spun.

Who sweats not with the flock will seek
in vain

To shed the words which are ripe fruit
of sun.

THE GARDEN OF EPICURUS

(1883)

That Garden of sedate Philosophy
Once flourished, fenced from passion and
mishap,

A shining spot upon a shaggy map;
Where mind and body, in fair junction
free,

Luted their joyful concord; like the tree 5
From root to flowering twigs a flowing
sap.

Clear Wisdom found, in tended Nature's
lap,

Of gentlemen the happy nursery.

That Garden would on light supremest
verge,

Were the long drawing of an equal
breath 10

Healthful for Wisdom's head, her heart,
her aims.

Our world which for its Babels wants a
scourge,

And for its wilds a husbandman, acclaims
The crucifix that came of Nazareth.

TO J. M. (John Morley)

(1867)

Let Fate or Insufficiency provide

Mean ends for men who what they are
would be:

Penned in their narrow day, no change
they see

Save one which strikes the blow to brutes
and pride.

Our faith is ours and comes not on a
tide: 5

And whether Earth's great offspring, by
decree,

Must rot if they abjure rapacity,
Not argument but effort shall decide.

They number many heads in that hard
flock;

Trim swordsmen they push forth: yet
try thy steel. 10

Thou, fighting for poor humankind, wilt
feel

The strength of Roland in thy wrist to
hew

A chasm sheer into the barrier rock,

And bring the army of the faithful
through.

ON THE DANGER OF WAR

(1885)

Avert, High Wisdom, never vainly
wooded,

This threat of War, that shows a land
brain-sick!

When Nations gain the pitch where
rhetoric

Seems reason, they are ripe for cannon's
food.

Dark looms the issue though the cause
be good, 5

But with the doubt 'tis our old devil's
trick.

O now the down-slope of the lunatic
Illumine, lest we redden of that brood.

For not since man in his first view of thee
Ascended to the heavens, giving signs 10

Within him of deep sky and sounded sea,
Did he unforfeiting thy laws transgress;

In peril of his blood his ears incline
To drums whose loudness is their empti-
ness.

SOCIETY

(1888)

Historic be the survey of our kind,
And how their brave Society took shape.

Lion, wolf, vulture, fox, jackal, and ape,
The strong of limb, the keen of nose, we

find,—

Who, with some jars in harmony, com-
bined, 5

Their primal instincts taming, to escape
The brawl indecent, and hot passions

drape.

Convenience pricked conscience; that, the
mind.

Thus entered they the field of milder
beasts,

Which in some sort of civil order graze, 10
And do half-homage to the God of Laws.

But are they still for their old ravenous
feasts,

Earth gives the edifice they build no base:
They spring another flood of fangs and
claws.

MEN AND MAN

(1887)

Men the Angels eyed:

And here they were wild waves,
And there as marsh descried;

Men the Angels eyed,—

And liked the picture best

5

Where they were greenly dressed
In brotherhood of graves.

Man the Angels marked:

He led a host through murk,

On fearful seas embarked; 10

Man the Angels marked,—

To think, without a nay,

That he was good as they,

And help him at his work.

Man and Angels, ye

A sluggish fen shall drain,

Shall quell a warring sea.

Man and Angels, ye

Whom stain of strife befouls,

A light to kindle souls 20

Bear radiant in the stain.

MANFRED

(1887)

Projected from the bilious Childe,

This clatterjaw his foot could set

On Alps, without a breast beguiled

To glow in shedding rascal sweat.

Somewhere about his grinder teeth, 5

He mouthed of thoughts that grilled be-
neath,

And summoned Nature to her feud

With bile-and-buskin Attitude.

Considerably was the world

Of spinsterdom and clergy racked 10

While he his hinted horrors hurled,

And she pictorially attacked.

A duel hugeous! Tragic? Ho!

The cities, not the mountains, blow

Such bladders,—in their shapes con- 15

fessed

An after-dinner's indigest.

WHIMPER OF SYMPATHY

(1887)

Hawk or shrike has done this deed

Of downy feathers: rueful sight!

Sweet sentimentalist, invite

Your bosom's Power to intercede.

So hard it seems that one must bleed 5
Because another needs will bite!
All round we find cold Nature slight
The feelings of the totter-kneed.

O it were pleasant, with you
To fly from this tussle of foes, — 10
The shambles, the charnel, the wrinkle!
To dwell in yon dribble of dew
On the cheek of your sovereign rose,
And live the young life of a twinkle.

HARD WEATHER

(1888)

Bursts from a rending East in flaws
The young green leaflet's harrier, sworn
To strew the garden, strip the shaws,
And show our Spring with banner torn.
Was ever such virago morn? 5
The wind has teeth, the wind has claws.
All the wind's wolves through woods are
loose,
The wild wind's falconry aloft.
Shrill underfoot the grassblade shrews,
At gallop, clumped; and down the croft 10
Bestrid by shadows, beaten, tossed, —
It seems a scythe, it seems a rod.
The howl is up at the howl's accost;
The shivers greet and the shivers nod.

Is the land ship? we are rolled, we
drive 15
Tritonly, cleaving hiss and hum;
Whirl with the dead, or mount or dive,
Or down in dregs, or on in scum.
And drums the distant, pipes the near,
And vale and hill are grey in grey, 20
As when the surge is crumbling sheer,
And sea-mews wing the haze of spray.
Clouds — are they bony witches? —
swarms,
Darting swift on the robber's flight,
Hurry an infant sky in arms, — 25
It peeps, it becks: 'tis day, 'tis night . . .
Black while over the loop of blue

The swathe is closed, like shroud on
corse . . .
Lo, as if swift the Furies flew,
The Fates at heel at a cry to horse! 30

Interpret me the savage whirr:
And is it Nature scourged; or she,
Her offspring's executioner,
Reducing land to barren sea?
But is there meaning in a day 35
When this fierce angel of the air,
Intent to throw, and haply slay,
Can, for what breath of life we bear,
Exact the wrestle? — Call to mind
The many meanings glistening up 40
When Nature, to her nurslings kind,
Hands them the fruitage and the cup!
And seek we rich significance
Not elsewhere than with those tides
Of pleasure on the sunned expanse, 45
Whose flow deludes, whose ebb derides?

Look in the face of men who fare
Lock-mouthed, a match in lungs and
thews
For this fierce angel of the air,
To twist with him and take his bruise. 50
That is the face beloved of old
Of Earth, young mother of her brood.
Nor broken for us shows the mould
When muscle is in mind renewed:
Though farther from her nature rude, 55
Yet nearer to her spirit's hold;
And though of gentler mood serene,
Still forceful of her fountain-jet.
So shall her blows be shrewdly met, —
Be luminously read the scene 60
Where Life is at her grindstone set,
That she may give us edging keen,
String us for battle, till as play
The common strokes of fortune shower.
Such meaning in a dagger-day 65
Our wits may clasp, to wax in power —
Yea, feel us warmer at her breast,
By spin of blood in lusty drill,
Than when her honeyed hands caressed,
And Pleasure, sapping, seemed to fill. 70

Behold the life at ease: it drifts.
 The sharpened life commands its course.
 She winnows, winnows roughly; sifts,
 To dip her chosen in her source.
 Contention is the vital force, 75
 Whence pluck they brain, her prize of
 gifts,

Sky of the senses!—on which height,
 Not disconnected, yet released,
 They see how spirit comes to light,
 Through conquest of the inner beast, 80
 Which Measure tames to movement sane,
 In harmony with what is fair.

Never is Earth misread by brain:
 That is the welling of her, there
 The mirror—with one step beyond, 85
 For likewise is it voice. And more:
 Benignest kinship bids respond
 When wail the weak, and them restore
 Whom days as fell as this may rive,—
 While Earth sits ebon in her gloom, 90
 Us atomies of life alive
 Unheeding, bent on life to come.
 Her children of the laboring brain,—
 These are the champions of the race,
 True parents, and the sole humane, 95
 With understanding for their base.
 Earth yields the milk, but all her mind
 Is vowed to thresh for stouter stock.
 Her passion for old giantkind,
 That scaled the mount, uphurled the
 rock, 100

Devolves on them who read aright
 Her meaning, and devoutly serve;
 Nor in her starlessness of night
 Peruse her with the craven nerve:
 But even as she from grass to corn, 105
 To eagle high from grubbing mole,—
 Prove in strong brain her noblest born,
 The station for the flight of soul.

THE BURDEN OF STRENGTH (1901)

If that thou hast the gift of strength, then
 know
 Thy part is to uplift the trodden low;
 Else in a giant's grasp, until the end,
 A hopeless wrestler shall thy soul contend.

THE QUESTION WHITHER (1888)

When we have thrown off this old suit,
 So much in need of mending,
 To sink among the naked mute,—
 Is that, think you, our ending?
 We follow many, more we lead; 5
 And you who sadly turf us,
 Believe not that all living seed
 Must flower above the surface.

Sensation is a gracious gift;
 But were it cramped to station, 10
 The prayer to have it cast adrift
 Would spout from all sensation.
 Enough if we have winked to sun,
 Have sped the plough a season:
 There is a soul for labor done, 15
 Endureth fixed as reason.

Then let our trust be firm in Good,
 Though we be of the fasting:
 Our questions are a mortal brood,
 Our work is everlasting. 20
 We children of Beneficence
 Are in its being sharers;
 And Whither vainer sounds than Whence,
 For word with such wayfarers.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909)

Choruses from Atalanta in Calydon (1864)

When the hounds of spring are on winter's
 traces, 65
 The mother of months in meadow or
 plain
 Fills the shadows and windy places
 With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
 And the brown bright nightingale amorous
 Is half assuaged for Itylus, 70
 For the Thracian ships and the foreign
 faces,
 The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying
of quivers,

Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers, 75
With a clamor of waters, and with
might:

Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west
shivers,

Round the feet of the day and the feet
of the night. 80

Where shall we find her, how shall we
sing to her,

Fold our hands round her knees, and
cling?

Oh that man's heart were as fire and
could spring to her,

Fire, or the strength of the streams that
spring!

For the stars and the winds are unto
her 85

As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to
her,

And the southwest-wind and the west-
wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,

And all the season of snows and sins; 90

The days dividing lover and lover,

The light that loses, the night that
wins;

And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover 95

Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year
flushes

From leaf to flower and flower to
fruit; 100

And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,

And the oat is heard above the lyre,

And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes

The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by
night, 105

Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with de-
light

The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide,
The laughing leaves of the trees divide, 110
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows, hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves
bare 115

Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its
leaves,

But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that
scare

The wolf that follows, the fawn that
flies. 120

Before the beginning of years,
There came to the making of man 315
Time, with a gift of tears;

Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven, 320

And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death. 325

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea; 330
And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be

In the houses of death and of birth:
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
And fashioned with loathing and
love, 335

With life before and after
 And death beneath and above, —
 For a day and a night and a morrow,
 That his strength might endure for a
 span
 With travail and heavy sorrow, — 340
 The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the
 south
 They gathered as unto strife:
 They breathed upon his mouth,
 They filled his body with life; 345
 Eyesight and speech they wrought
 For the veils of the soul therein;
 A time for labor and thought,
 A time to serve and to sin.
 They gave him light in his ways, 350
 And love, and a space for delight,
 And beauty and length of days,
 And night, and sleep in the night.
 His speech is a burning fire;
 With his lips he travaileth; 355
 In his heart is a blind desire,
 In his eyes foreknowledge of death.
 He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
 Sows, and he shall not reap:
 His life is a watch or a vision 360
 Between a sleep and a sleep.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE (1866)

Here, where the world is quiet;
 Here, where all trouble seems
 Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
 In doubtful dreams of dreams:
 I watch the green field growing 5
 For reaping folk and sowing,
 For harvest-time and mowing,
 A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
 And men that laugh and weep; 10
 Of what may come hereafter
 For men that sow to reap:

I am weary of days and hours,
 Blown buds of barren flowers,
 Desires and dreams and powers 15
 And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor;
 And far from eye or ear
 Wan waves and wet winds labor,
 Weak ships and spirits steer; 20
 They drive adrift, and whither
 They wot not who make thither. —
 But no such winds blow hither,
 And no such things grow here;

No growth of moor or coppice, 25
 No heather-flower or vine:
 But bloomless buds of poppies,
 Green grapes of Proserpine, —
 Pale beds of blowing rushes, 30
 Where no leaf blooms or blushes
 Save this whereout she crushes
 For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
 In fruitless fields of corn,
 They bow themselves and slumber 35
 All night till light is born;
 And like a soul belated,
 In hell and heaven unmated,
 By cloud and mist abated
 Comes out of darkness morn. 40

Though one were strong as seven,
 He too with death shall dwell,
 Nor wake with wings in heaven,
 Nor weep for pains in hell;
 Though one were fair as roses, 45
 His beauty clouds and closes;
 And well though love reposes,
 In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
 Crowned with calm leaves, she stands 50
 Who gathers all things mortal
 With cold immortal hands:
 Her languid lips are sweeter
 Than Love's, who fears to greet her,
 To men that mix and meet her 55
 From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
 She waits for all men born;
 Forgets the earth her mother,
 The life of fruits and corn;
 And spring and seed and swallow
 Take wing for her and follow
 Where summer song rings hollow
 And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
 The old loves with wearier wings;
 And all dead years draw thither,
 And all disastrous things;
 Dead dreams of days forsaken,
 Blind buds that snows have shaken,
 Wild leaves that winds have taken,
 Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
 And joy was never sure;
 Today will die tomorrow;
 Time stoops to no man's lure;
 And Love, grown faint and fretful,
 With lips but half regretful
 Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
 Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
 From hope and fear, set free,
 We thank with brief thanksgiving
 Whatever gods may be,
 That no life lives for ever;
 That dead men rise up never;
 That even the weariest river
 Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
 Nor any change of light;
 Nor sound of waters shaken,
 Nor any sound or sight;
 Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
 Nor days, nor things diurnal:
 Only the sleep eternal
 In an eternal night.

HYMN TO PROSERPINE

(1866)

(AFTER THE PROCLAMATION IN ROME OF
 THE CHRISTIAN FAITH)

Vicisti, Galilæe

I have lived long enough, having seen
 one thing, that love hath an end:
 Goddess and maiden and queen, be near
 me now and befriend.

'Thou art more than the day or the mor-
 row, the seasons that laugh or that
 weep;

For these give joy and sorrow; but thou,
 Proserpina, sleep.

Sweet is the treading of wine, and sweet
 the feet of the dove;

But a goodlier gift is thine than foam of
 the grapes or love.

Yea, is not even Apollo, with hair and
 harpstring of gold,

A bitter God to follow, a beautiful God
 to behold?

I am sick of singing; the bays burn deep
 and chafe: I am fain

To rest a little from praise and grievous
 pleasure and pain.

For the Gods we know not of, who give
 us our daily breath:

We know they are cruel as love or life,
 and lovely as death.

O Gods dethroned and deceased, cast
 forth, wiped out in a day!

From your wrath is the world released,
 redeemed from your chains, men say.

New Gods are crowned in the city, their
 flowers have broken your rods:

They are merciful, clothed with pity,—
 the young compassionate Gods.

But for me their new device is barren, the
 days are bare;

Things long past over suffice, and men
 forgotten that were.

Time and the Gods are at strife: ye dwell
 in the midst thereof,

Draining a little life from the barren
 breasts of love.

I say to you, cease, take rest; yea, I say
to you all, be at peace,
Till the bitter milk of her breast and the
barren bosom shall cease.

Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? But
these thou shalt not take,—

The laurel, the palms, and the pæan, the
breasts of the nymphs in the brake;

Breasts more soft than a dove's, that
tremble with tenderer breath; 25

And all the wings of the Loves, and all
the joy before death;

All the feet of the hours that sound as
a single lyre,

Dropped and deep in the flowers, with
strings that flicker like fire.

More than these wilt thou give, things
fairer than all these things?

Nay, for a little we live, and life hath
mutable wings. 30

A little while and we die: shall life not
thrive as it may?

For no man under the sky lives twice,
outliving his day.

And grief is a grievous thing, and a man
hath enough of his tears:

Why should he labor, and bring fresh
grief to blacken his years?

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean;
the world has grown gray from thy
breath: 35

We have drunken of things Lethean, and
fed on the fulness of death.

Laurel is green for a season, and love is
sweet for a day;

But love grows bitter with treason, and
laurel outlives not May.

Sleep, shall we sleep after all? for the
world is not sweet in the end;

For the old faiths loosen and fall, the
new years ruin and rend. 40

Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul
is a rock that abides;

But her ears are vexed with the roar, and
her face with the foam, of the
tides.

O lips that the live blood faints in, the
leavings of racks and rods!

O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of
gibbeted Gods!

Though all men abase them before you
in spirit, and all knees bend, 45

I kneel not, neither adore you,—but
standing, look to the end.

All delicate days and pleasant, all spirits
and sorrows are cast

Far out with the foam of the present that
sweeps to the surf of the past:

Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and
between the remote sea-gates,

Waste water washes, and tall ships
founder, and deep death waits: 50

Where, mighty with deepening sides, clad
about with the seas as with
wings,

And impelled of invisible tides, and ful-
filled of unspeakable things,

White-eyed and poisonous-finned, shark-
toothed and serpentine-curved,

Rolls, under the whitening wind of the
future, the wave of the world.

The depths stand naked in sunder behind
it, the storms flee away; 55

In the hollow before it the thunder is
taken and snared as a prey;

In its sides is the north-wind bound; and
its salt is of all men's tears;

With light of ruin, and sound of changes,
and pulse of years;

With travail of day after day, and with
trouble of hour upon hour.

And bitter as blood is the spray; and the
crests are as fangs that devour; 60

And its vapor and storm of its steam as
the sighing of spirits to be;

And its noise as the noise in a dream;
and its depth as the roots of the
sea;

And the height of its heads as the height
of the utmost stars of the air:

And the ends of the earth at the might
thereof tremble, and time is made
bare.

Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins,
will ye chasten the high sea with
rods? 65

Will ye take her to chain her with chains,
who is older than all ye Gods?

All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire
shall ye pass and be past;

Ye are Gods, and behold ye shall die, and
the waves be upon you at last.

In the darkness of time, in the deeps of
the years, in the changes of things,

Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and
the world shall forget you for
kings. 70

Though the feet of thine high priests tread
where thy lords and our forefathers
trod,

Though these that were Gods are dead,
and thou being dead art a God,

Though before thee the throned Cytherean
be fallen, and hidden her
head,—

Yet thy kingdom shall pass, Galilean, thy
dead shall go down to thee dead.

Of the maiden thy mother, men sing as a
goddess with grace clad around; 75

Thou art throned where another was
king; where another was queen she
is crowned.

Yea, once we had sight of another: but
now she is queen, say these.

Not as thine, not as thine was our mother,
a blossom of flowering seas,

Clothed round with the world's desire as
with raiment, and fair as the foam,

And fleeter than kindled fire, and a goddess
and mother of Rome. 80

For thine came pale and a maiden, and
sister to sorrow; but ours,—

Her deep hair heavily laden with odor
and color of flowers,

White rose of the rose-white water, a
silver splendor, a flame,—

Bent down unto us that besought her,
and earth grew sweet with her name.

For thine came weeping, a slave among
slaves, and rejected; but she 85

Came flushed from the full-flushed wave,
and imperial, her foot on the sea.

And the wonderful waters knew her, the
winds and the viewless ways;

And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the
sea-blue stream of the bays.

Ye are fallen, our Lords, by what token?
we wist that ye should not fall.

Ye were all so fair that are broken; and
one more fair than ye all. 90

But I turn to her still, having seen she
shall surely abide in the end:

Goddess and maiden and queen, be near
me now and befriend.

O daughter of earth, of my mother, her
crown and blossom of birth,

I am also, I also, thy brother; I go as I
came unto earth.

In the night where thine eyes are as
moons are in heaven,—the night
where thou art, 95

Where the silence is more than all tunes,
where sleep overflows from the
heart,

Where the poppies are sweet as the rose
in our world, and the red rose is
white,

And the wind falls faint as it blows with
the fume of the flowers of the night;

And the murmur of spirits that sleep in
the shadow of Gods from afar

Grows dim in thine ears and deep as the
deep dim soul of a star: 100

In the sweet low light of thy face, under
heavens untrod by the sun,

Let my soul with their souls find place,
and forget what is done and undone.

Thou art more than the Gods who
number the days of our temporal
breath;

For these give labor and slumber; but
thou, Proserpina, death.

Therefore now at thy feet I abide for a
season in silence. I know 105

I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep
as they sleep; even so.

For the glass of the year is brittle where-
in we gaze for a span:

A little soul for a little bears up this
corpse which is man.
So long I endure, no longer; and laugh
not again, neither weep.
For there is no God found stronger than
death; and death is a sleep. 110

HERTHA

(c. 1868)

I am that which began;
Out of me the years roll;
Out of me God and man;
I am equal and Whole:
God changes, and man, and the form of
them bodily; I am the soul. 5

Before ever land was,
Before ever the sea,
Or soft hair of the grass,
Or fair limbs of the tree,
Or the flesh-colored fruit of my branches,
I was; and thy soul was in me. 10

First life on my sources
First drifted and swam;
Out of me are the forces
That save it or damn;
Out of me man and woman, and wild-
beast and bird: before God was, I
am. 15

Beside or above me
Nought is there to go:
Love or unlove me,
Unknow me or know,
I am that which unloves me and loves;
I am stricken, and I am the blow; 20

I the mark that is missed
And the arrows that miss,
I the mouth that is kissed
And the breath in the kiss,—
The search, and the sought, and the
seeker,—the soul and the body that
is. 25

I am that thing which blesses
My spirit elate;
That which caresses
With hands uncreate
My limbs unbegotten, that measure the
length of the measure of fate. 30

But what thing dost thou now,
Looking Godward, to cry
"I am I, thou art thou,
I am low, thou art high"?
I am thou, whom thou seekest to find
him: find thou but thyself, thou
art I. 35

I the grain and the furrow,
The plough-cloven clod
And the ploughshare drawn
thorough,
The germ and the sod,—
The deed and the doer, the seed and the
sower, the dust which is God. 40

Hast thou known how I fashioned
thee,
Child, underground?
Fire that impassioned thee,
Iron that bound,
Dim changes of water,—what thing of
all these hast thou known of, or
found? 45

Canst thou say in thine heart
Thou has seen with thine eyes
With what cunning of art
Thou wast wrought in what
wise,
By what force of what stuff thou wast
shapen, and shown on my breast to
the skies? 50

Who hath given, who hath sold it
thee,
Knowledge of me?
Hath the wilderness told it thee?
Hast thou learnt of the sea?
Hast thou communed in spirit with night?
Have the winds taken counsel with
thee? 55

Have I set such a star
 To show light on thy brow
 That thou sawest from afar
 What I show to thee now?
 Have ye spoken as brethren together, the
 sun and the mountains and thou? 60

What is here, dost thou know it?
 What was, hast thou known?
 Prophet nor poet
 Nor tripod nor throne
 Nor spirit nor flesh can make answer, but
 only thy mother alone. 65

Mother, not maker, —
 Born, and not made;
 Though her children forsake her,
 Allured or afraid,
 Praying prayers to the God of their
 fashion, she stirs not for all that have
 prayed. 70

A creed is a rod,
 And a crown is of night;
 But this thing is God,
 To be man with thy might,
 To grow straight in the strength of thy
 spirit, and live out thy life as the
 light. 75

I am in thee to save thee,
 As my soul in thee saith;
 Give thou, as I gave thee,
 Thy life-blood and breath, —
 Green leaves of thy labor, white flowers
 of thy thought, and red fruit of thy
 death. 80

Be the ways of thy giving
 As mine were to thee;
 The free life of thy living,
 Be the gift of it free:
 Not as servant to lord, nor as master to
 slave, shalt thou give thee to me. 85

O children of banishment,
 Souls overcast, —
 Were the lights ye see vanish
 meant
 Always to last,
 Ye would know not the sun overshadowing
 the shadows and stars overpast. 90

I that saw where ye trod
 The dim paths of the night
 Set the shadow called God
 In your skies to give light;
 But the morning of manhood is risen, and
 the shadowless soul is in sight. 95

The tree many-rooted
 That swells to the sky
 With frondage red-fruited, —
 The life-tree am I;
 In the buds of your lives is the sap of my
 leaves: ye shall live and not die. 100

But the Gods of your fashion
 That take and that give,
 In their pity and passion
 That scourge and forgive, —
 They are worms that are bred in the
 bark that falls off: they shall die and
 not live. 105

My own blood is what stanches
 The wounds in my bark;
 Stars caught in my branches
 Make day of the dark,
 And are worshipped as suns till the sun-
 rise shall tread out their fires as a
 spark. 110

Where dead ages hide under
 The live roots of the tree,
 In my darkness the thunder
 Makes utterance of me;
 In the clash of my boughs with each
 other ye hear the waves sound of
 the sea. 115

That noise is of Time,
 As his feathers are spread
 And his feet set to climb
 Through the boughs overhead,
 And my foliage rings round him and
 rustles, and branches are bent with
 his tread. 120

The storm-winds of ages
 Blow through me and cease, —
 The war-wind that rages,
 The spring-wind of peace, —
 Ere the breath of them roughen my
 tresses, ere one of my blossoms in-
 crease. 125

All sounds of all changes,
 All shadows and lights
 On the world's mountain-ranges
 And stream-riven heights,
 Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and
 language of storm-clouds on earth-
 shaking nights; 130

All forms of all faces,
 All works of all hands
 In unsearchable places
 Of time-stricken lands, —
 All death and all life, and all reigns and
 all ruins, drop through me as
 sands. 135

Though sore be my burden
 And more than ye know,
 And my growth have no guerdon
 But only to grow,
 Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings
 above me, or death worms below. 140

These too have their part in me,
 As I too in these:
 Such fire is at heart in me,
 Such sap is this tree's,
 Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets
 of infinite lands and of seas. 145

In the spring-colored hours
 When my mind was as May's,
 There brake forth of me flowers
 By centuries of days, —
 Strong blossoms with perfume of man-
 hood, shot out from my spirit as
 rays. 150

And the sound of them springing
 And smell of their shoots
 Were as warmth and sweet singing
 And strength to my roots;
 And the lives of my children made per-
 fect with freedom of soul were my
 fruits. 155

I bid you but be;
 I have need not of prayer;
 I have need of you free
 As your mouths of mine air;
 That my heart may be greater within
 me, beholding the fruits of me
 fair; 160

More fair than strange fruit is
 Of faith ye espouse;
 In me only the root is
 That blooms in your boughs:
 Behold now your God that ye made you,
 to feed him with faith of your
 vows: 165

In the darkening and whitening
 Abysses adored,
 With dayspring and lightning
 For lamp and for sword,
 God thunders in heaven, and his angels
 are red with the wrath of the
 Lord. 170

O my sons, O too dutiful
 Toward Gods not of me,
 Was not I enough beautiful?
 Was it hard to be free?
 For behold, I am with you, am in you
 and of you; look forth now and
 see: 175

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
 With miracles shod,
 With the fires of his thunders
 For raiment and rod,
 God trembles in heaven, and his angels
 are white with the terror of God. 185

For his twilight is come on him,
 His anguish is here;
 And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
 Grown gray from his fear;
 And his hour taketh hold on him stricken,
 the last of his infinite year. 185

Thought made him and breaks
 him,
 Truth slays and forgives;
 But to you, as time takes him,
 This new thing it gives,
 Even love, the beloved Republic, that
 feeds upon freedom and lives. 190

For truth only is living,
 Truth only is whole,
 And the love of his giving
 Man's polestar and pole:
 Man, pulse of my centre, and fruit of
 my body, and seed of my soul; 195

One birth of my bosom;
 One beam of mine eye;
 One topmost blossom
 That scales the sky:
 Man, equal and one with me, man that
 is made of me, man that is I. 200

TO WALT WHITMAN IN AMERICA (1871)

Send but a song oversea for us,—
 Heart of their hearts who are free,
 Heart of their singer,—to be for us
 More than our singing can be;
 Ours, in the tempest at error, 5
 With no light but the twilight of terror:
 Send us a song oversea!

Sweet-smelling of pine-leaves and grasses,
 And blown as a tree through and
 through
 With the winds of the keen mountain-
 passes, 10
 And tender as sun-smitten dew;
 Sharp-tongued as the winter that shakes
 The wastes of your limitless lakes,—
 Wide-eyed as the sea-line's blue.

O strong-winged soul, with prophetic 15
 Lips hot with the bloodbeats of song;
 With tremor of heartstrings magnetic;
 With thoughts as thunders in throng;
 With consonant ardors of chords,
 That pierce men's souls as with swords 20
 And hale them hearing along:

Make us, too, music, to be with us
 As a word from a world's heart
 warm;
 To sail the dark as a sea with us,
 Full-sailed, outsinging the storm; 25
 A song to put fire in our ears,
 Whose burning shall burn up tears,
 Whose sign bid battle reform;

A note in the ranks of a clarion,
 A word in the wind of cheer, 30
 To consume as with lightning the car-
 rion
 That makes time foul for us here;
 In the air that our dead things infest,
 A blast of the breath of the west,
 Till east way as west way is clear. 35

Out of the sun beyond sunset,
 From the evening whence morning shall
 be;
 With the rollers in measureless onset,
 With the van of the storming sea,
 With the world-wide wind, with the
 breath 40
 That breaks ships driven upon death,
 With the passion of all things free;

With the sea-steeds footless and
frantic, —

White myriads for death to bestride
In the charge of the ruining Atlantic, 45
Where deaths by regiments ride, —
With clouds and clamors of waters,
With a long note shriller than slaughter's
On the furrowless fields world-wide;

With terror, with ardor and wonder, — 50
With the soul of the season that wakes
When the weight of a whole year's
thunder

In the tidestream of autumn breaks:
Let the flight of the wide-winged word
Come over, come in and be heard, 55
Take form and fire for our sakes.

For a continent bloodless with travail
Here toils and brawls as it can;
And the web of it who shall unravel
Of all that peer on the plan, — 60
Would fain grow men, but they grow not,
And fain be free, but they know not
One name for freedom and man?

One name, not twain for division;
One thing, not twain, from the birth; 65
Spirit and substance and vision,
Worth more than worship is worth;
Unbeheld, unadored, undivined,
The cause, the centre, the mind,
The secret and sense of the earth. 70

Here as a weakling in irons,
Here as a weanling in bands,
As a prey that the stake-net environs,
Our life that we looked for stands;
And the man-child naked and dear, 75
Democracy, turns on us here
Eyes trembling, with tremulous hands.

It sees not what season shall bring to it
Sweet fruit of its bitter desire;
Few voices it hears yet sing to it, 80
Few pulses of hearts reaspire:
Foresees not time, nor forehears
The noises of imminent years, —
Earthquake, and thunder, and fire;

When crowned and weaponed and curb-
less 85

It shall walk, without helm or shield,
The bare burnt furrows and herbless
Of war's last flame-stricken field, —
Till godlike, equal with time,
It stand in the sun sublime, 90
In the godhead of man revealed.

Round your people and over them
Light like raiment is drawn,
Close as a garment to cover them,
Wrought not of mail nor of lawn: 95
Here, with hope hardly to wear,
Naked nations and bare
Swim, sink, strike out for the dawn.

Chains are here, and a prison,
Kings, and subjects, and shame: 100
If the God upon you be arisen,
How should our songs be the same?
How, in confusion of change,
How shall we sing, in a strange
Land, songs praising his name? 105

God is buried and dead to us,
Even the spirit of earth,
Freedom: so have they said to us,
Some with mocking and mirth,
Some with heartbreak and tears: 110
And a God without eyes, without ears, —
Who shall sing of him, dead in the
birth?

The earth-god Freedom, the lonely
Face lightening, the footprint un-
shod, —
Not as one man crucified only, 115
Nor scourged with but one life's rod:
The soul that is substance of nations,
Reincarnate with fresh generations, —
The great god Man, which is God.

But in weariest of years and obscurest, 120
Doth it live not at heart of all things, —
The one God and one spirit, a purest
Life, fed from unstanachable springs?
Within love, within hatred it is,
And its seed in the stripe as the kiss, 125
And in slaves is the germ, and in kings.

Freedom we call it, for holier
 Name of the soul's there is none:
 Surelier it labors, if slower,
 Than the metres of star or of sun; 130
 Slower than life into breath,
 Surelier than time into death,
 It moves till its labor be done:

Till the motion be done and the measure
 Circling through season and clime, — 135
 Slumber and sorrow and pleasure,
 Vision of virtue and crime;
 Till consummate with conquering eyes,
 A soul disembodied, it rise
 From the body transfigured of time; 140

Till it rise and remain and take station
 With the stars of the world that re-
 joice;
 Till the voice of its heart's exultation
 Be as theirs an invariable voice, —
 By no discord of evil estranged, 145
 By no pause, by no breach in it changed,
 By no clash in the chord of its choice.

It is one with the world's generations,
 With the spirit, the star, and the sod:
 With the kingless and king-stricken na-
 tions, 150
 With the cross, and the chain, and the
 rod:
 The most high, the most secret, most
 lonely,
 The earth-soul Freedom, that only
 Lives, and that only is God.

COR CORDIUM (Shelley)
 (1871)

O heart of hearts, the chalice of love's
 fire,
 Hid round with flowers and all the
 bounty of bloom;
 O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
 The lyric liberty made life a lyre;
 O heavenly heart, at whose most dear
 desire 5

Dead love, living and singing, cleft his
 tomb, —
 And with him risen and regent in death's
 room,
 All day thy choral pulses rang full choir;
 O heart whose beating blood was running
 song,
 O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs
 were: 10
 Help us for thy free love's sake to be
 free,
 True for thy truth's sake, for thy
 strength's sake strong, —
 Till very liberty make clean and fair
 The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN
 (1876)

In a coign of the cliff between lowland
 and highland,
 At the sea-down's edge between wind-
 ward and lee,
 Walled round with rocks as an inland
 island,
 The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
 A girdle of brushwood and thorn en-
 closes 5
 The steep square slope of the blossom-
 less bed,
 Where the weeds that grew green from
 the graves of its roses
 Now lie dead.
 The fields fall southward, abrupt and
 broken,
 To the low last edge of the long lone
 land. 10
 If a step should sound or a word be
 spoken,
 Would a ghost not rise at the strange
 guest's hand?
 So long have the gray bare walks lain
 guestless, —
 Through branches and briars if a man
 make way,
 He shall find no life but the sea-wind's,
 restless 15
 Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and
stifled

That crawls, by a track none turn to
climb,

To the strait waste place that the years
have rifled

Of all but the thorns that are touched
not of time. 20

The thorns he spares when the rose is
taken;

The rocks are left when he wastes the
plain;

The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-
shaken,

These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that
falls not; 25

As the heart of a dead man the seed-
plots are dry;

From the thicket of thorns whence the
nightingale calls not,

Could she call, there were never a rose
to reply.

Over the meadows that blossom and
wither,

Rings but the note of a sea-bird's
song; 30

Only the sun and the rain come hither

All year long.

The sun burns sear, and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless
breath.

Only the wind here hovers and revels 35

In a round where life seems barren as
death.

Here there was laughing of old; there
was weeping,

Haply, of lovers none ever will know,

Whose eyes went seaward, a hundred
sleeping

Years ago. 40

Heart handfast in heart as they stood,
"Look thither,"

Did he whisper? "Look forth from
the flowers to the sea;

For the foam-flowers endure when the
rose-blossoms wither,

And men that love lightly may die—
But we?"

And the same wind sang, and the same
waves whitened, 45

And or ever the garden's last petals
were shed,

In the lips that had whispered, the eyes
that had lightened,

Love was dead.

Or they loved their life, through, and
then went whither?

And were one to the end—but what
end who knows? 50

Love deep as the sea, as a rose must
wither,—

As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the
rose.

Shall the dead take thought for the dead
to love them?

What love was ever as deep as a grave?

They are loveless now as the grass above
them, 55

Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,

Not known of the cliffs and the fields
and the sea:

Not a breath of the time that has been
hovers

In the air now soft with a summer to
be. 60

Not a breath shall there sweeten the sea-
sons hereafter

Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh
now or weep,

When, as they that are free now of weep-
ing and laughter,

We shall sleep.

Here Death may deal not again forever; 65

Here Change may come not till all
change end:

From the graves they have made they
shall rise up never,

Who have left naught living to ravage
and rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild
ground growing, —

While the sun and the rain live, these
shall be; 70

Till a last wind's breath, upon all these
blowing,

Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff
crumble,

Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs
drink,

Till the strength of the waves of the high
tides humble 75

The fields that lessen, the rocks that
shrink, —

Here now in his triumph where all things
falter,

Stretched out on the spoils that his own
hand spread,

As a god self-slain on his own strange
altar,

Death lies dead. 80

A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

(1876)

I hid my heart in a nest of roses,
Out of the sun's way, hidden apart;

In a softer bed than the soft white
snow's is,

Under the roses I hid my heart.

Why would it sleep not? why should it
start, 5

When never a leaf of the rose-tree
stirred?

What made sleep flutter his wings and
part?

Only the song of a secret bird.

Lie still, I said, for the wind's wing
closes,

And mild leaves muffle the keen sun's
dart; 10

Lie still, for the wind on the warm seas
dozes —

And the wind is unquieter yet than thou
art.

Does a thought in thee still as a thorn's
wound smart?

Does the fang still fret thee of hope de-
ferred?

What bids the lips of thy sleep dis-
part? 15

Only the song of a secret bird.

The green land's name that a charm
encloses,

It never was writ in the traveller's
chart;

And sweet on its trees as the fruit that
grows is,

It never was sold in the merchant's
mart. 20

The swallows of dreams through its dim
fields dart,

And sleep's are the tunes in its tree-tops
heard:

No hound's note wakens the wild-
wood hart, —

Only the song of a secret bird.

ENVOI

In the world of dreams I have chosen my
part, 25

To sleep for a season, and hear no word
Of true love's truth or of light love's art,

Only the song of a secret bird.

A CHILD'S LAUGHTER

(1882)

All the bells of heaven may ring,

All the birds of heaven may sing,

All the wells on earth may spring,

All the winds on earth may bring

All sweet sounds together: 5

Sweeter far than all things heard,

Hand of harper, tone of bird,

Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,

Welling water's winsome word,

Wind in warm wan weather, 10

One thing yet there is, that none
 Hearing ere its chime be done
 Knows not well the sweetest one
 Heard of man beneath the sun,
 Hoped in heaven hereafter; 15
 Soft and strong and loud and light,—
 Very sound of very light
 Heard from morning's rosiest height,—
 When the soul of all delight
 Fills a child's clear laughter. 20

Golden bells of welcome rolled
 Never forth such notes, nor told
 Hours so blithe in tones so bold,
 As the radiant mouth of gold
 Here that rings forth heaven. 25
 If the golden-crested wren
 Were a nightingale—why, then
 Something seen and heard of men
 Might be half as sweet as when
 Laughs a child of seven. 30

CHILD AND POET (1882)

You send me your love in a letter,
 I send you my love in a song:
 Ah child, your gift is the better,
 Mine does you but wrong.
 No fame, were the best less brittle, 5
 No praise, were it wide as earth,
 Is worth so much as a little
 Child's love may be worth.
 We see the children above us
 As they might angels above: 10
 Come back to us, child, if you love us,
 And bring us your love.

THE ROUNDEL (1883)

A roundel is wrought as a ring or a star-
 bright sphere,
 With craft of delight and with cunning
 of sound unsought,
 That the heart of the hearer may smile if
 to pleasure his ear
 A roundel is wrought.

Its jewel of music is carven of all or of
 aught,— 5
 Love, laughter, or mourning,—remem-
 brance of rapture or fear,—
 That fancy may fashion to hang in the ear
 of thought.

As a bird's quick song runs round, and the
 hearts in us hear
 Pause answer to pause, and again the
 same strain caught,—
 So moves the device whence, round as a
 pearl or tear, 10
 A roundel is wrought.

THE SUNBOWS (1884)

Spray of song that springs in April, light
 of love that laughs through May,
 Live and die and live for ever: nought of
 all things far less fair
 Keeps a surer life than these that seem to
 pass like fire away.
 In the souls they live which are but all the
 brighter that they were;
 In the hearts that kindle, thinking what
 delight of old was there. 5
 Wind that shapes and lifts and shifts them
 bids perpetual memory play
 Over dreams, and in and out of deeds and
 thoughts, which seem to wear
 Light that leaps and runs and revels
 through the springing flames of spray.

Dawn is wild upon the waters where we
 drink of dawn today:
 Wide, from wave to wave rekindling in
 rebound through radiant air, 10
 Flash the fires unwoven, and woven again,
 of wind that works in play,—
 Working wonders more than heart may
 note, or sight may wellnigh dare,
 Wefts of rarer light than colors rain from
 heaven, though this be rare.
 Arch on arch unbuilt in building, reared
 and ruined ray by ray,

Breaks and brightens, laughs and lessens,
 — even till eyes may hardly bear 15
 Light that leaps and runs and revels
 through the springing flames of spray.

Year on year sheds light and music, rolled
 and flashed from bay to bay
 Round the summer capes of time and
 winter headlands keen and bare,
 Whence the soul keeps watch, and bids her
 vassal memory watch and pray,
 If perchance the dawn may quicken, or
 perchance the midnight spare. 20
 Silence quells not music, darkness takes
 not sunlight in her snare:

Shall not joys endure that perish? Yea,
 saith dawn, though night say nay:
 Life on life goes out; but very life enkin-
 dles everywhere
 Light that leaps and runs and revels
 through the springing flames of spray.

Friend, were life no more than this is, well
 would yet the living fare. 25
 All aflower and all afire and all flung
 heavenward, who shall say
 Such a flash of life were worthless? This
 is worth a world of care, —
 Light that leaps and runs and revels
 through the springing flames of spray.

HOPE AND FEAR

(1882)

Beneath the shadow of dawn's aerial cope,
 With eyes enkindled as the sun's own
 sphere,
 Hope from the front of youth in godlike
 cheer
 Looks Godward, — past the shades where
 blind men grope
 Round the dark door that prayers nor
 dreams can ope, — 5
 And makes for joy the very darkness dear
 That gives her wide wings play; nor
 dreams that fear
 At noon may rise and pierce the heart of
 hope.

Then, when the soul leaves off to dream
 and yearn,
 May truth first purge her eyesight to
 discern 10
 What once being known leaves time no
 power to appal;
 Till youth at last, ere yet youth be not,
 learn
 The kind wise word that falls from years
 that fall:
 "Hope thou not much, and fear thou not
 at all."

AFTER SUNSET

(*From a sonnet-sequence, 1882: number
 III*)

If light of life outlive the set of sun
 That men call death and end of all things,
 then
 How should not that which life held best
 for men
 And proved most precious, though it seem
 undone
 By force of death and woful victory won, 5
 Be first and surest of revival, when
 Death shall bow down to life arisen again?
 So shall the soul seen be the selfsame one
 That looked and spake with even such lips
 and eyes
 As love shall doubt not then to recog-
 nize, — 10
 And all bright thoughts and smiles of all
 time past
 Revive, transfigured, but in spirit and
 sense
 None other than we knew, for evidence
 That love's last mortal word was not his
 last.

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT BROWNING

(1889. *From a sonnet-sequence*)

He held no dream worth waking: so he
 said,
 He who stands now on death's tri-
 umphal steep, —

Awakened out of life wherein we sleep
And dream of what he knows and sees,
being dead.

But never death for him was dark or
dread: 5

"Look forth," he bade the soul, and fear
not. Weep,

All ye that trust not in his truth, and keep
Vain memory's vision of a vanished head
As all that lives of all that once was he
Save that which lightens from his word.

But we, 10
Who, seeing the sunset-colored waters
roll,

Yet know the sun subdued not of the
sea, —

Nor weep, nor doubt that still the spirit is
whole,

And life and death but shadows of the
soul.

JAMES THOMSON (1834-1882)

From THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT

(1870-74 : section XX)

The Sphinx

I sat me weary on a pillar's base,
And leaned against the shaft; for broad
moonlight

O'erflowed the peacefulness of cloistered
space,

A shore of shadow slanting from the
right:

The great cathedral's western front stood
there, 5

A wave-worn rock in that calm sea of air.

Before it, opposite my place of rest,

Two figures faced each other, large,
austere:

A couchant sphinx in shadow to the breast,
An angel standing in the moonlight
clear; 10

So mighty by magnificence of form,
They were not dwarfed beneath that mass
enorm.

Upon the cross-hilt of a naked sword

The angel's hands, as prompt to smite,
were held;

His vigilant, intense regard was poured 15

Upon the creature placidly unquelled,
Whose front was set at level gaze which
took

No heed of aught, a solemn trance-like
look.

And as I pondered these opposed shapes

My eyelids sank in stupor, that dull
swoon 20

Which drugs, and with a leaden mantle
drapes,

The outworn to worse weariness. But
soon

A sharp and clashing noise the stillness
broke,

And from the evil lethargy I woke.

The angel's wings had fallen, stone on
stone, 25

And lay there shattered; hence the sud-
den sound:

A warrior leaning on his sword alone

Now watched the sphinx with that re-
gard profound;

The sphinx unchanged looked forthright,
as aware

Of nothing in the vast abyss of air. 30

Again I sank in that repose unsweet, —

Again a clashing noise my slumber rent;

The warrior's sword lay broken at his
feet:

An unarmed man with raised hands im-
potent

Now stood before the sphinx, which ever
kept 35

Such mien as if with open eyes it slept.

My eyelids sank in spite of wonder
grown, —

A louder crash upstartled me in dread:

The man had fallen forward, stone on
stone,
And lay there shattered, with his trunk-
less head 40
Between the monster's large quiescent
paws, —
Between its grand front changeless as life's
laws.

The moon had circled westward full and
bright,
And made the temple-front a mystic
dream,
And bathed the whole enclosure with its
light, — 45
The sworded angel's wrecks, the sphinx
supreme:
I pondered long that cold majestic face
Whose vision seemed of infinite void space.

W. E. HENLEY

(1849-1903)

OUT OF THE NIGHT

(1875)

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance 5
I have not winced nor cried aloud:
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade; 10
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the
scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

R. W. DIXON

(1833-1900)

HUMANITY

(1864)

There is a soul above the soul of each,
A mightier soul, which yet to each be-
longs, —

There is a sound made of all human
speech,

And numerous as the concourse of all
songs:

And in that soul lives each, in each that
soul, 5

Though all the ages are its lifetime vast;
Each soul that dies, in its most sacred
whole

Receiveth life that shall for ever last.

And thus for ever with a wider span

Humanity o'erarches time and death: 10

Man can elect the universal man

And live in life that ends not with his
breath;

And gather glory that increases still

Till Time his glass with Death's last dust
shall fill.

MATHILDE BLIND

(1841-1896)

THE DEAD

The dead abide with us! Though stark
and cold

Earth seem to grip them, they are with us
still:

They have forged our chains of being for
good or ill,

And their invisible hands these hands yet
hold.

Our perishable bodies are the mould 5

In which their strong imperishable will, —

Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil, —

Hath grown incorporate through dim time
untold.

Vibrations infinite of life in death,

As a star's travelling light survives its
 star! 10
 So may we hold our lives that, when we
 are
 The fate of those who then will draw this
 breath,
 They shall not drag us to their judgment-
 bar
 And curse the heritage that we bequeath.

W. E. H. LECKY
 (1838-1903)

SAY NOT THAT THE PAST IS DEAD

Say not that the past is dead.
 Though the Autumn leaves are shed,
 Though the day's last flush has flown,
 Though the lute has lost its tone —
 Still within, unfelt, unseen, 5
 Lives the life that once has been;
 With a silent power still
 Guiding heart or brain or will,
 Lending bias, force, and hue
 To the things we think and-do. 10
 Strange! how aimless looks or words
 Sometimes wake forgotten chords, —
 Bidding dreams and memories leap
 From a long unbroken sleep.

AUSTIN DOBSON
 (1840-1921)

WITH PIPE AND FLUTE (1877)

With pipe and flute the rustic Pan
 Of old made music sweet for man;
 And wonder hushed the warbling bird,
 And closer drew the calm-eyed herd, —
 The rolling river slower ran. 5

Ah! would, — ah! would, a little span,
 Some air of Arcady could fan
 This age of ours, too seldom stirred
 With pipe and flute!

But now for gold we plot and plan; 10
 And, from Beersheba unto Dan,
 Apollo's self might pass unheard,
 Or find the night-jar's note preferred —
 Not so it fared, when time began,
 With pipe and flute! 15

R. L. STEVENSON
 (1850-1894)

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON (1882)

If I have faltered more or less
 In my great task of happiness;
 If I have moved among my race
 And shown no glorious morning face;
 If beams from happy human eyes 5
 Have moved me not; if morning skies,
 Books, and my food, and summer rain
 Knocked on my sullen heart in vain: —
 Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
 And stab my spirit broad awake; 10
 Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
 Choose thou, before that spirit die,
 A piercing pain, a killing sin,
 And to my dead heart run them in!

REQUIEM (1884)

Under the wide and starry sky,
 Dig the grave and let me lie.
 Glad did I live and gladly die,
 And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me: 5
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

THE MORNING DRUM-CALL (1896)

The morning drum-call on my eager ear
 Thrills unforgotten yet; the morning dew
 Lies yet undried along my field of noon.
 But now I pause at whiles in what I do,

And count the bell, and tremble lest I
hear 5
(My work untrimmed) the sunset gun
too soon.

RUDYARD KIPLING
(1865-)

THE LAST CHANTEY
(1892)

"and there was no more sea."

Thus said the Lord in the Vault above the
Cherubim,
Calling to the angels and the souls in
their degree:
"Lo! Earth has passed away
On the smoke of Judgment Day.
That Our word may be established shall
We gather up the sea?" 5

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly
mariners:
"Plague upon the hurricane that made
us furl and flee!
But the war is done between us,
In the deep the Lord hath seen us —
Our bones we'll leave the barracout',
and God may sink the sea!" 10

Then said the soul of Judas that betrayèd
Him:
"Lord, hast Thou forgotten Thy cove-
nant with me?
How once a year I go
To cool me on the floe,
And Ye take my day of mercy if Ye take
away the sea!" 15

Then said the soul of the Angel of the
Off-shore Wind
(He that bits the thunder when the
bull-mouthed breakers flee):
"I have watch and ward to keep
O'er Thy wonders on the deep,
And Ye take mine honor from me if Ye
take away the sea!" 20

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly
mariners:
"Nay, but we were angry, and a hasty
folk are we!
If we worked the ship together
Till she foundered in foul weather,
Are we babes that we should clamor for
a vengeance on the sea?" 25

Then said the souls of the slaves that men
threw overboard:
"Kennelled in the picaroon a weary
band were we;
But Thy arm was strong to save,
And it touched us on the wave,
And we drownd the long tides idle till
Thy Trumpets tore the sea." 30

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle
Paul to God:
"Once we frapped a ship, and she la-
bored woundily.
There were fourteen score of these,
And they blessed Thee on their
knees,
When they learned Thy Grace and
Glory under Malta by the sea!" 35

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly
mariners,
Plucking at their harps, and they plucked
unhandily:
"Our thumbs are rough and tarred,
And the tune is something hard —
May we lift a Deepsea Chantey such as
seamen use at sea?" 40

Then said the souls of the gentlemen-
adventurers, —
Fettered wrist to bar all for red iniq-
uity:
"Ho, we revel in our chains
O'er the sorrow that was Spain's;
Heave or sink it, leave or drink it, we
were masters of the sea!" 45

Up spake the soul of a gray Gothavn
 'speckshioner
 (He that led the flinching in the fleets
 of fair Dundee):
 "Ho, the ringer and right whale,
 And the fish we struck for sale, —
 Wili Ye whelm them all for wanton-
 ness that wallow in the sea?" 50

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly
 mariners,
 Crying: "Under Heaven, here is neither
 lead nor lea!
 Must we sing for evermore
 On the windless, glassy floor?
 Take back your golden fiddles and we'll
 beat to open sea!"

Then stooped the Lord, and He called the
 good sea up to Him,
 And 'stablished its borders unto all eter-
 nity,
 That such as have no pleasure
 For to praise the Lord by measure,
 They may enter into galleons and serve
 Him on the sea. 60

*Sun, wind, and cloud shall fail not from
 the face of it,
 Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the ful-
 mar flying free;
 And the ships shall go abroad
 To the glory of the Lord
 Who heard the silly sailor-folk and gave
 them back their sea!* 65

RECESSIONAL (1897)

God of our fathers, known of old,
 Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
 Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
 Dominion over palm and pine:
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, 5
 Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
 The captains and the kings depart:
 Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
 An humble and a contrite heart. 10
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
 On dune and headland sinks the fire:
 Lo, all our pomp of yesterday 15
 Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
 Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
 Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
 Wild tongues that have not Thee in
 awe, — 20
 Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
 Or lesser breeds without the Law:
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust 25
 In reeking tube and iron shard, —
 All valiant dust that builds on dust,
 And, guarding, calls not Thee to
 guard, —
 For frantic boast and foolish word:
 Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord! 30
 Amen.

THE SONS OF MARTHA (1907)

The Sons of Mary seldom bother, for they
 have inherited that good part;
 But the Sons of Martha favor their
 Mother of the careful soul and the
 troubled heart.

And because she lost her temper once, and
 because she was rude to the Lord her
 Guest,

Her Sons must wait upon Mary's Sons,
 world without end, reprieve, or rest.

It is their care in all the ages to take the
 buffet and cushion the shock. 5
 It is their care that the gear engages; it is
 their care that the switches lock.

It is their care that the wheels run, truly;
 it is their care to embark and entrain,
 Tally, transport, and deliver duly the Sons
 of Mary by land and main.

They say to mountains, "Be ye removèd."
 They say to the lesser floods "Be dry."
 Under their rods are the rocks reprovèd —
 they are not afraid of that which is
 high. 10

Then do the hill-tops shake to the summit
 — then is the bed of the deep laid
 bare,

That the Sons of Mary may overcome it,
 pleasantly sleeping and unaware.

They finger death at their gloves' end
 where they piece and repiece the living
 wires.

He rears against the gates they tend: they
 feed him hungry behind their fires.

Early at dawn, ere men see clear, they
 stumble into his terrible stall, 15

And hale him forth like a haltered steer,
 and goad and turn him till evenfall.

To these from birth is Belief forbidden;
 from these till death is Relief afar.

They are concerned with matters hidden —
 under the earth-line their altars are:

The secret fountains to follow up, waters
 withdrawn to restore to the mouth,

And gather the floods as in a cup, and pour
 them again at a city's drouth. 20

They do not preach that their God will
 rouse them a little before the nuts
 work loose.

They do not teach that His Pity allows
 them to leave their work when they
 damn-well choose.

As in the thronged and the lighted ways, so
 in the dark and the desert they stand,

Wary and watchful all their days that
 their brethren's days may be long in
 the land.

Raise ye the stone or cleave the wood to
 make a path more fair or flat, — 25

Lo, it is black already with blood some Son
 of Martha spilled for that!

Not as a ladder from earth to Heaven, not
 as a witness to any creed,

But simple service simply given to his own
 kind in their common need.

And the Sons of Mary smile and are
 blessèd — they know the angels are on
 their side.

They know in them is the Grace confessèd,
 and for them are the Mercies multi-
 plied. 30

They sit at the Feet — they hear the Word
 — they see how truly the Promise
 runs:

They have cast their burden upon the
 Lord, and — the Lord He lays it on
 Martha's Sons!

JOHN DAVIDSON

(1857-1909)

TO THE NEW MEN

(1894)

Heat the furnace hot;
 Smelt the things of thought
 Into dross and dew;
 Mould the world anew.

More than earth and sea 5
 Is a heart and eye:
 Gird yourselves, and try
 All the powers that be.

Wicked, cease at once 10
 Troubling; wearied eyes,
 Rest you now, while suns
 Dawn and moons arise.

'Stablish heaven today;
 Cleanse the beast-marked brow;
 Wipe all tears away: 15
 Do it — do it now!

Love, and hope, and know:
 Man — you must adore him;
 Let the whole past go:
 Think God's thought before Him.

20

Knowledge is power? Above
 All else, knowledge is love.

Heat the furnace hot:
 Smelt the world-old thought
 Into dross and dew;
 Mould the earth anew.

25

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-)

A SHROPSHIRE LAD (1896)

IV. REVEILLE

Wake: the silver dusk returning
 Up the beach of darkness brims,
 And the ship of sunrise burning
 Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters,
 Trampled to the floor it spanned,
 And the tent of night in tatters
 Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

5

Up, lad, up, 'tis late for lying:
 Hear the drums of morning play;
 Hark, the empty highways crying
 "Who'll beyond the hills away?"

10

Towns and countries woo together,
 Forelands beacon, belfries call:
 Never lad that trod on leather
 Lived to feast his heart with all.

15

Up, lad: thews that lie and cumber
 Sunlit pallets never thrive;
 Morns abed and daylight slumber
 Were not meant for man alive.

20

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
 Breath's a ware that will not keep.
 Up, lad: when the journey's over
 There'll be time enough to sleep.

LII

Far in a western brookland
 That bred me long ago,
 The poplars stand and tremble
 By pools I used to know.

There, in the windless nighttime,
 The wanderer, marvelling why,
 Halts on the bridge to hearken
 How soft the poplars sigh.

5

He hears: long since forgotten
 In fields where I was known,
 Here I lie down in London
 And turn to rest alone.

10

There, by the starlit fences,
 The wanderer halts and hears
 My soul that lingers sighing
 About the glimmering weirs.

15

LIV

With rue my heart is laden
 For golden friends I had,
 For many a rose-lipt maiden
 And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
 The lightfoot boys are laid;
 The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
 In fields where roses fade.

5

W. B. YEATS (1865-)

INTO THE TWILIGHT

(*Epilogue of The Celtic Twilight*, 1893)

Outworn heart, in an outworn time,
 Come clear of the nets of wrong and
 right:
 Laugh, heart, again in the gray twilight,
 Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn.

Your mother Eire is always young, 5
Dew ever shining and twilight gray;
Though hope fall from you and love decay
Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.

Come, heart, where hill is heaped on hill;
For there the mystical brotherhood 10
Of sun and moon and hollow wood
And river and stream work out their will.

And God stands winding his lonely horn,
And time and the world are ever in flight,
And love is less kind than the gray twilight, 15
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.

"A. E." (G. W. RUSSELL)
(1862-)

THE GREAT BREATH
(1894)

Its edges foamed with amethyst and rose,
Withers once more the old blue flower of
day:
There where the ether like a diamond
glows
Its petals fade away.

A shadowy tumult stirs the dusky air; 5
Sparkle the delicate dew, the distant
snows;
The great deep thrills, for through it
everywhere
The breath of Beauty blows.

I saw how all the trembling ages past,
Moulded to her by deep and deeper
breath, 10
Neared to the hour when Beauty breathes
her last
And knows herself in death.

INHERITANCE
(1894)

As flow the rivers to the sea
Adown from rocky hill or plain,
A thousand ages toiled for thee
And gave thee harvest of their gain; 5
And weary myriads of yore
Dug out for thee earth's buried ore.

The shadowy toilers for thee fought,
In chaos of primeval day,
Blind battles with they-knew-not-what;
And each before he passed away 10
Gave clear articulate cries of woe:
Your pain is theirs of long ago.

And all the old heart sweetness sung,
The joyous life of man and maid
In forests when the earth was young, 15
In rumors round your childhood strayed:
The careless sweetness of your mind
Comes from the buried years behind.

And not alone unto your birth
Their gifts the weeping ages bore, — 20
The old descents of God on earth
Have dowered thee with celestial lore:
So, wise, and filled with sad and gay,
You pass into the further day.

"FIONA MACLEOD"
(WILLIAM SHARP)
(1855-1905)

THE WHITE PEACE
(1894)

It lies not on the sunlit hill
Nor on the sunlit plain:
Nor ever on any running stream
Nor on the unclouded main —

But sometimes, through the Soul of Man, 5
Slow moving o'er his pain,
The moonlight of a perfect peace
Floods heart and brain.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

(1859-1907)

BEFORE HER PORTRAIT IN
YOUTH

(1893)

As lovers, banished from their lady's face,
And hopeless of her grace,
Fashion a ghostly sweetness in its place, —
Fondly adore

Some stealth-won cast attire she wore, 5
A kerchief, or a glove;
And at the lover's beck

Into the glove there fleets the hand,
Or at impetuous command
Up from the kerchief floats the virgin
neck: 10

So I, in very lowlihead of love, —
Too shyly reverencing
To let one thought's light footfall
smooth

Tread near the living, consecrated thing, —
Treasure me thy cast youth. 15

This outworn vesture, tenantless of thee,
Hath yet my knee,
For that, — with show and semblance
fair

Of the past Her
Who once the beautiful, discarded raiment
bare, — 20
It cheateth me.

As gale to gale drifts breath
Of blossom's death,
So, dropping down the years from hour to
hour,
This dead youth's scent is wafted me
today: 25
I sit, and, from the fragrance, dream the
flower.

So, then, she looked (I say):
And so her front sank down
Heavy beneath the poet's iron crown;
On her mouth museful sweet 30
(Even as the twin lips meet)
Did thought and sadness greet;
Sighs

In those mournful eyes
So put on visibilities, — 35
As viewless ether turns, in deep on deep,
to dyes.

Thus, long ago,
She kept her meditative paces slow
Through maiden meads, with wavèd
shadow and gleam
Of locks half-lifted on the winds of
dream. 40

Till Love up-caught her to his chariot's
glow.
Yet, voluntary, happier Proserpine!

This drooping flower of youth thou let-
test fall
I, faring in the cockshut-light, astray,
Find on my 'lated way, 45
And stoop, and gather for memorial,
And lay it on my bosom, and make it mine.
To this, the all of love the stars allow me,
I dedicate and vow me.

I reach back through the days 50
A trothed hand to the dead the last trump
shall not raise.

The water-wraith that cries
From those eternal sorrows of thy pic-
tured eyes
Entwines and draws me down their sound-
less intricacies.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

(c. 1890)

I fled Him, down the nights and down the
days;

I fled Him, down the arches of the
years;

I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of
tears

I hid from Him, and under running
laughter. 5

Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd
fears,

From those strong Feet that followed,
followed after.

But with unhurrying chase, 10
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat, — and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet:
 "All things betray thee, who betrayest
 Me." 15

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
 By many a hearted casement, curtained
 red,
 Trellised with intertwining charities;
 (For, though I knew His love Who fol-
 lowèd,
 Yet was I sore adread 20
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught
 beside).

But, if one little casement parted wide.
 The gust of His approach would clash
 it to.

Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to
 pursue.

Across the margent of the world I fled, 25
 And troubled the gold gateways of the
 stars,

Smiting for shelter on their clangèd
 bars;

Fretted to dulcet jars
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the
 moon.

I said to Dawn, Be sudden — to Eve, Be
 soon: 30

With thy young skyey blossoms heap me
 over

From this tremendous Lover —
 Float thy vague veil about me, lest He
 see!

I tempted all His servitors, but to find
 My own betrayal in their constancy, — 35
 In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
 Their traitorous trueness, and their
 loyal deceit.

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
 Clung to the whistling mane of every
 wind.

But whether they swept, smoothly
 fleet, 40

The long savannahs of the blue;
 Or whether, thunder-driven,

They clangèd His chariot 'thwart a
 heaven

Plashy with flying lightnings round the
 spurn o' their feet:

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to
 pursue. 45

Still with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 Came on the following Feet,
 And a Voice above their beat: 50
 "Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shel-
 ter Me."

I sought no more that after which I
 strayed

In face of man or maid;
 But still within the little children's eyes
 Seems something, something that re-
 plies, 55

They at least are for me, surely for me!

I turned me to them very wistfully;
 But just as their young eyes grew sudden
 fair

With dawning answers there,
 Their angel plucked them from me by the
 hair. 60

"Come then, ye other children, Nature's,
 — share

With me" (said I) "your delicate fellow-
 ship;

Let me greet you lip to lip,
 Let me twine with you caresses:

Wantoning 65
 With our Lady-Mother's vagrant
 tresses;

Banqueting
 With her in her wind-walled palace,
 Underneath her azured dais;
 Quaffing, as your taintless way is, 70

From a chalice
 Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."

So it was done:
 I in their delicate fellowship was one —
 Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies. 75

I knew all the swift importings
 On the wilful face of skies;
 I knew how the clouds arise

- Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings —
 All that's born or dies, 80
 Rose and drooped with; made them
 shapers
 Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;
 With them joyed and was bereaven.
 I was heavy with the even,
 When she lit her glimmering tapers 85
 Round the day's dead sanctities;
 I laughed in the morning's eyes.
 I triumphed and I saddened with all
 weather:
 Heaven and I wept together,
 And its sweet tears were salt with mortal
 mine; 90
 Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
 I laid my own to beat,
 And share commingling heat.
- But not by that, by that, was eased my
 human smart;
 In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's
 gray cheek. 95
 For ah! we know not what each other
 says,
 These things and I: in sound I
 speak —
 Their sound is but their stir, they speak by
 silences.
 Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my
 drouth;
 Let her, if she would owe me, 100
 Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and
 show me
 The breasts o' her tenderness:
 Never did any milk of hers once bless
 My thirsting mouth.
- Nigh and nigh draws the chase, 105
 With unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 And past those noisèd Feet
 A Voice comes yet more fleet —
 "Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st
 not Me." 110
- Naked I, wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
 My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn
 from me,
 And smitten me to my knee:
- I am defenseless utterly.
 I slept, methinks, and woke, 115
 And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in
 sleep.
 In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
 I shook the pillaring hours
 And pulled my life upon me; grimed with
 smears,
 I stand amid the dust o' the mounded
 years — 120
 My mangled youth lies dead beneath the
 heap.
 My days have crackled and gone up in
 smoke,
 Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a
 stream.
- Yea, faileth now even dream
 The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist; 125
 Even the linked fantasies, in whose blos-
 somey twist
 I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
 Are yielding, — cords of all too weak
 account
 For earth, with heavy griefs so over-
 plussed.
- Ah! is Thy love indeed 130
 A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
 Suffering no flowers except its own to
 mount?
 Ah! must, —
 Designer infinite! —
 Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou
 canst limn with it? 135
 My freshness spent its wavering shower i'
 the dust;
 And now my heart is as a broken fount,
 Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt
 down ever
 From the dank thoughts that shiver
 Upon the sighful branches of my mind. 140
- Such is: what is to be?
 The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the
 rind?
 I dimly guess what Time in mists con-
 founds;
 Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
 From the hid battlements of Eternity: 145
 Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then

Round the half-glimpstèd turrets slowly
wash again —

But not ere him who summoneth

I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpleal, cypress-
crowned: 150

His name I know, and what his trumpet
saith.

Whether man's heart or life it be which
yields

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit 155

Comes on at hand the bruit;

That Voice is round me like a bursting
sea:

"And is thy earth so marred,

Shattered in shard on shard?

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest
Me! 160

Strange, piteous, futile thing!

Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught"

(He said),

"And human love needs human meriting:

How hast thou merited, — 165

Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?

Alack, thou knowest not

How little worthy of any love thou art!

Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,

Save Me, save only Me? 170

All which I took from thee I did but take,

Not for thy harms,

But just that thou might'st seek it in My
arms.

All which thy child's mistake

Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at
home: 175

Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall:

Is my gloom, after all,

Shade of His hand, outstretched caress-
ingly? —

"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, 180

I am He Whom thou seekest!

Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest
Me."

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

(1908)

"In no Strange Land"

O world invisible, we view thee;
O world intangible, we touch thee;
O world unknowable, we know thee;
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

Does the fish soar to find the ocean, 5
The eagle plunge to find the air —
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumor of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars! —
The drift of pinions, would we hearken, 11
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places —
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces 15
That miss the many-splendored thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry — and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing
Cross. 20

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry, — clinging heaven by the hems:
And lo, Christ walking on the water,
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!

THOMAS HARDY

(1840-)

NATURE'S QUESTIONING

(1898)

When I look forth at dawning, — pool,
Field, flock, and lonely tree,
All seem to gaze at me
Like chastened children sitting silent in a
school;

Their faces dulled, constrained, and worn,
 As though the master's ways
 Through the long teaching days
 Had cowed them till their early zest was
 overborne.

Upon them stirs in lippings mere
 (As if once clear in call, 10
 But now scarce breathed at all):—
 "We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us
 here!

"Has some Vast Imbecility,
 Mighty to build and blend,
 But impotent to tend, 15
 Framed us in jest, and left us now to
 hazardry?

"Or come we of an Automaton
 Unconscious of our pains? . . .
 Or are we live remains
 Of Godhead dying downwards, brain and
 eye now gone? 20

"Or is it that some high Plan betides,
 As yet not understood,
 Of Evil stormed by Good,—
 We the Forlorn Hope over which Achieve-
 ment strides?"

Thus things around. No answerer I . . .
 Meanwhile the winds, and rains, 26
 And Earth's old glooms and pains
 Are still the same; and Death and glad
 Life neighbor nigh.

THE DARKLING THRUSH

(December, 1900)

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When Frost was spectre-gray,
 And Winter's dregs made desolate
 The weakening end of day.
 The tangled bine-stems scored the sky 5
 Like strings from broken lyres;
 And all mankind that haunted nigh
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
 The Century's corpse outleant; 10
 His crypt, the cloudy canopy,
 The wind, his death-lament.
 The ancient pulse of germ and birth
 Was shrunken hard and dry,
 And every spirit upon earth 15
 Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice burst forth among
 The bleak twigs overhead
 In a full-hearted evensong
 Of joy illimited: 20
 An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
 In blast-beruffled plume,
 Had chosen thus to fling his soul
 Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings 25
 Of such ecstatic sound
 Was written on terrestrial things
 Afar or nigh around,
 That I could think there trembled through
 His happy good-night air 30
 Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
 And I was unaware.

GEORGE MEREDITH

(1909)

Forty years back, when much had place
 That since has perished out of mind,
 I heard that voice and saw that face.

He spoke as one afoot will wind
 A morning horn ere men awake; 5
 His note was trenchant, turning kind.

He was of those whose wit can shake
 And riddle to the very core
 The counterfeits that Time will break . . .

Of late, when we two met once more, 10
 The luminous countenance and rare
 Shone just as forty years before.

So that, when now all tongues declare
His shape unseen by his green hill,
I scarce believe he sits not there. 15

No matter! Further and further still
Through the world's vaporous vitiate air
His words wing on — as live words will.

THE WIND BLEW WORDS

(1917)

The wind blew words along the skies,
And these it blew to me
Through the wide dusk: "Lift up your
eyes,
Behold this troubled tree,
Complaining as it sways and plies; 5
It is a limb of thee.

"Yea, too, the creatures sheltering
round, —
Dumb figures, wild and tame;
Yea, too, thy fellows who abound,
Either of speech the same 10
Or far and strange, — black, dwarfed, and
browned:
They are stuff of thy own frame."

I moved on in a surging awe
Of inarticulateness
At the pathetic Me I saw 15
In all his huge distress, —
Making self-slaughter of the law
To kill, break, or suppress.

A THOUGHT IN TWO MOODS

(1917)

I saw it — pink and white — revealed
Upon the white and green:
The white and green was a daisied field, —
The pink and white, Ethleen.

And as I looked, it seemed in kind 5
That difference they had none:
The two fair bodiments combined
As varied miens of one.

A sense that, in some mouldering year,
As one they both would lie, 10
Made me move quickly on to her
To pass the pale thought by.

She laughed and said: "Out there, to me,
You looked so weather-browned,
And brown in clothes, you seemed to be 15
Made of the dusty ground!"

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

(1917)

This statue of Liberty, busy man,
Here erect in the city square,
I have watched while your scrubbings, this
early morning,
Strangely wistful,
And half tristful, 5
Have turned her from foul to fair;

With your bucket of water, and mop, and
brush,
Bringing her out of the grime
That has smeared her during the smokes
of winter
With such glumness 10
In her dumbness,
And aged her before her time.

You have washed her down with motherly
care, —
Head, shoulders, arm, and foot,
To the very hem of the robes that drape
her, — 15
All expertly
And alertly,
Till a long stream, black with soot,

Flows over the pavement to the road,
And her shape looms pure as snow. 20
I read you are hired by the City guard-
ians, —
May be yearly,
Or once merely, —
To treat the statues so?

"Oh, I'm not hired by the Councilmen 25
 To cleanse the statues here:
 I do this one as a self-willed duty,
 Not as paid to,
 Or at all made to,
 But because the doing is dear." 30

Ah, then I hail you brother and friend, —
 Liberty's knight divine!
 What you have done would have been my
 doing, —
 Yea, most verily,
 Well, and thoroughly, — 35
 Had but your courage been mine!

"Oh, I care not for Liberty's mould,
 Liberty charms not me;
 What's Freedom but an idler's vision,
 Vain, pernicious, 40
 Often vicious,
 Of things that cannot be!

"Memory it is that brings me to this —
 Of a daughter — my one sweet own.
 She grew a famous carver's model, 45
 One of the fairest
 And of the rarest:
 She sat for the figure as shown.

"But alas, she died in this distant place
 Before I was warned to betake 50
 Myself to her side! . . . And in love of
 my darling, —
 In love of the fame of her,
 And the good name of her, —
 I do this for her sake."

Answer I gave not. Of that form 55
 The carver was I at his side;
 His child, my model, held so saintly,
 Grand in feature,
 Gross in nature,
 In the dens of vice had died. 60

ROBERT BRIDGES

(1844-)

SO SWEET LOVE SEEMED

(1894)

So sweet love seemed that April morn,
 When first we kissed beside the thorn, —
 So strangely sweet, it was not strange
 We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell — let truth be told — 5
 That love will change in growing old;
 Though day by day is nought to see,
 So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
 Quite to forget what once he was, 10
 Nor even in fancy to recall
 The pleasure that was all in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
 So deep in summer floods is drowned,
 I wonder, bathed in joy complete, 15
 How love so young could be so sweet.

MELANCHOLIA

(1904)

The sickness of desire, that in dark days
 Looks on the imagination of despair,
 Forgetteth man, and stinteth God his
 praise;
 Nor but in sleep findeth a cure for care.
 Uncertainty that once gave scope to dream
 Of laughing enterprise and glory untold, 6
 Is now a blackness that no stars redeem,
 A wall of terror in a night of cold.
 Fool! thou that hast impossibly desired
 And now impatiently despair'st, — see 10
 How nought is changed: Joy's wisdom is
 attired
 Splendid for others' eyes if not for thee:
 Not love or beauty or youth from earth is
 fled;
 If they delight thee not, 'tis thou art dead.

SIR WILLIAM WATSON

(1858-

SONG'S APOSTASY

(1905)

When is the Muse most lustily acclaimed?
 When she in paths not native goes astray,
 There to disown her record if she may, —
 Deny her lineage, turn as one ashamed
 From all she was, and all that once was
 famed 5
 To be her realm and birthright. Yet to-
 day,
 Her need is rather to retrace her way
 To where of old her steadfast signal
 flamed;
 Thence counting it her glory to bestow
 On man the things he is poor in, — not the
 things 10
 Life spawns for ever with a rank excess;
 To teach him beauty and not ugliness,
 The upward not the downward truth; and
 so
 To the mountains lead him, and the cold
 clear springs.

W. W. GIBSON

(1878-)

FIRES

(Poem of Fires, 1910-11)

Snug in my easy chair,
 I stirred the fire to flame.
 Fantastically fair,
 The flickering fancies came,
 Born of heart's desire: — 5
 Amber woodland streaming,
 Topaz islands dreaming,
 Sunset-cities gleaming,
 Spire on burning spire;
 Ruddy-windowed taverns, 10
 Sunshine-spilling wines,
 Crystal-lighted caverns
 Of Golconda's mines;
 Summers unreturning,

Passion's crater yearning, 15
 Troy the ever-burning,
 Shelley's lustral pyre;
 Dragon-eyes, unsleeping,
 Witches' cauldrons leaping,
 Golden galleys sweeping 20
 Out from sea-walled Tyre:
 Fancies, fugitive and fair,
 Flashed with singing through the air —
 Till, dazzled by the drowsy glare,
 I shut my eyes to heat and light; 25
 And saw, in sudden night,
 Crouched in the dripping dark,
 With steaming shoulders stark,
 The man who hews the coal to feed my
 fire.

From THOROUGHFARES

(1908-14)

THE ICE

Her day out from the workhouse-ward,
 she stands,
 A grey-haired woman, decent and precise,
 With prim black bonnet and neat paisley
 shawl,
 Among the other children by the stall, —
 And with grave relish eats a penny ice. 5
 To wizened toothless gums, with quaking
 hands
 She holds it, shuddering with delicious
 cold;
 Nor heeds the jeering laughter of young
 men —
 The happiest, in her innocence, of all:
 For, while their insolent youth must soon
 grow old, 10
 She, who's been old, is now a child again.

ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Against the green flame of the hawthorn-
 tree,
 His scarlet tunic burns;
 And livelier than the green sap's mantling
 glee,
 The Spring fire tingles through him headily
 As quivering he turns 5

And stammers out the old amazing tale
 Of youth and April weather;
 While she, with half-breathed jests that,
 sobbing, fail,
 Sits, tight-lipped, quaking, eager-eyed, and
 pale,
 Beneath her purple feather. 10

PROMETHEUS

All day beneath the bleak, indifferent skies,
 Broken and blind, a shivering bag of bones,
 He trudges over icy paving-stones,
 And "Matches! Matches! Matches!
 Matches!" cries.

And now beneath the dismal, dripping
 night, 5
 And shadowed by a deeper night, he
 stands:
 And yet he holds within his palsied hands
 Quick fire enough to set his world alight.

RALPH HODGSON

(1879-)

EVE

(1913)

Eve, with her basket, was
 Deep in the bells and grass,
 Wading in bells and grass
 Up to her knees, —
 Picking a dish of sweet 5
 Berries and plums to eat,
 Down in the bells and grass
 Under the trees.

Mute as a mouse in a 10
 Corner the cobra lay,
 Curled round a bough of the
 Cinnamon tall . . .
 Now to get even and
 Humble proud heaven, and
 Now was the moment or 15
 Never at all!

"Eva!" — each syllable
 Light as a flower fell —
 "Eva!" he whispered the
 Wondering maid:
 Soft as a bubble sung
 Out of a linner's lung,
 Soft and most silverly
 "Eva!" he said.

Picture that orchard sprite, 25
 Eve, with her body white,
 Supple and smooth to her
 Slim finger tips, —
 Wondering, listening,
 Listening, wondering, 30
 Eve with a berry
 Half-way to her lips.

Oh had our simple Eve
 Seen through the make-believe!
 Had she but known the 35
 Pretender he was! —
 Out of the boughs he came,
 Whispering still her name,
 Tumbling in twenty rings
 Into the grass. 40

Here was the strangest pair
 In the world anywhere, —
 Eve in the bells and grass
 Kneeling, and he
 Telling his story low . . . 45
 Singing birds saw them go
 Down the dark path to
 The Blasphemous Tree.

Oh what a clatter when
 Titmouse and Jenny Wren 50
 Saw him successful and
 Taking his leave!
 How the birds rated him,
 How they all hated him!
 How they all pitied 55
 Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying
 Outside in the lane, —
 Eve, with no dish of sweet
 Berries and plums to eat, 60
 Haunting the gate of the
 Orchard in vain . . .

Picture the lewd delight
Under the hill tonight —
"Eva!" the toast goes round, 65
"Eva!" again.

RUPERT BROOKE

(1887-1915)

HEAVEN

(c. 1913)

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear.
Fish say, they have their Stream and 5
Pond, —
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear, —
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud; 10
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry.
Mud unto mud! — Death eddies near — 15
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,
Is wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth
One
Who swam ere rivers were begun, — 20
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
And under that Almighty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in.
Oh! never fly conceals a hook, 25
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook;
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found, — 30
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

PEACE

(1914)

Now, God be thanked Who has matched
us with His hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us
from sleeping!
With hand made sure, clear eye, and
sharpened power,
To turn, — as swimmers into cleanness
leaping, —
Glad from a world grown old and cold
and weary; 5
Leave the sick hearts that honor could
not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and
dreary,
And all the little emptiness of love!
Oh! we, who have known shame, we have
found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep
has mending, — 10
Naught broken save this body, lost but
breath;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long
peace there,
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but
Death.

THE SOLDIER

(1914)

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign
field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust con-
cealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made
aware, 5
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways
to roam, —
A body of England's, breathing English
air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of
home.
And think, — this heart, all evil shed
away,

A pulse in the eternal mind, no less 10
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by
 England given;
 Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as
 her day;
 And laughter, learnt of friends; and
 gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an English
 heaven.

JOHN MASEFIELD

(1874-)

MEN ARE MADE HUMAN BY THE MIGHTY FALL

Men are made human by the mighty fall
 The mighty passion led to, — these remain.
 The despot, at the last assaulted wall,
 By long disaster is made man again;
 The faithful fool who follows the torn
 flag, 5
 The woman marching by the beaten man,
 Make with their truth atonement for the
 brag,
 And earn a pity for the too proud plan.
 For in disaster, in the ruined will,
 In the soiled shreds of what the brain con-
 ceived, 10
 Something above the wreck is steady
 still,
 Bright above all that cannot be retrieved, —
 Grandeur of soul, — a touching of the
 star
 That good days cover, but by which we
 are.

AH, WE ARE NEITHER HEAVEN NOR EARTH

Ah, we are neither heaven nor earth, but
 men;
 Something that uses and despises both, —
 That takes its earth's contentment in the
 pen,
 Then sees the world's injustice and is
 wroth

And, flinging off youth's happy promise,
 flies 5
 Up to some breach, despising earthly
 things,
 And, in contempt of hell and heaven, dies,
 Rather than bear some yoke of priests or
 kings.
 Our joys are not of heaven nor earth, but
 man's:
 A woman's beauty, or a child's delight; 10
 The trembling blood when the discoverer
 scans
 The sought-for world, the guessed-at
 satellite;
 The ringing scene; the stone at point to
 blush,
 For unborn men to look at and say,
 "Hush."

TEWKESBURY ROAD

It is good to be out on the road, and going
 one knows not where,
 Going through meadow and village, one
 knows not whither nor why, —
 Through the grey, light drift of the dust, ·
 in the keen cool rush of the air,
 Under the flying white clouds, and the
 broad blue lift of the sky;
 And to halt at the chattering brook, in the
 tall green fern at the brink 5
 Where the harebell grows, and the
 gorse, and the foxgloves purple and
 white, —
 Where the shy-eyed delicate deer troop
 down to the brook to drink
 When the stars are mellow and large at
 the coming on of the night.
 O, to feel the beat of the rain, and the
 homely smell of the earth,
 Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy
 past power of words; 10
 And the blessed green comely meadows
 are all a-ripple with mirth
 At the noise of the lambs at play and
 the dear wild cry of the birds.

BIOGRAPHIES, NOTES, AND SUGGESTIONS

BIOGRAPHIES, NOTES, AND SUGGESTIONS

PART ONE: THE EARLIER NINETEENTH CENTURY

ROGERS: A WISH

This poem is one of the best examples of that eighteenth century pastoralism (the more or less conventional yearning of city poets for the country) which the spirit of young Wordsworth was just then condemning. Unlike Wordsworth, Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) cared little for rural retirement. When he was a youth confined to London by his father's banking business, his poetic mood could well find relief in the idyllic scene of "A Wish." But when he retired from active business some twenty years later—a wealthy, witty, and sociable personage—he domiciled himself, not near a "willowy brook," but close to the heart of London. His house became a sort of headquarters of literary society in the earlier nineteenth century. He was friend, and sometimes helper, of the greater poets. Before any of them had risen into prominence his reputation had been established in 1792 by "The Pleasures of Memory," a poem in the still regnant mode of the school of Pope. It has the careful grace of rhythm and diction, and also the quiet sweetness of spirit, which appear also in "A Wish."

(1.) 1. *cot*: cottage.—The two lofty objects in the neighborhood of the cottage are placed, one in the first and one in the last line of the poem, like protecting termini. How are the other objects grouped, in each stanza?

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

Most of his long life Wordsworth spent in the Lake District, the beautiful moun-

tainous country in the north of England. Born at Cockermouth, educated at Hawkshead Grammar School, he lived close to nature and to rustic folk through boyhood and youth. At Cambridge, where he matriculated in St. John's College, he doubtless acquired a richer culture than he himself supposed, though, all his life, he derived less from books than have most poets of his rank. During the summer vacation of 1790 he made a walking tour through France and Switzerland, witnessing the early enthusiasm of the French Revolution; and in the following year, after graduation, he was again in France, where he became an ardent disciple of the Revolutionary faith, and where, as has recently been discovered, he had a liaison with a young French lady, named Annette Vallon, that resulted in the birth of a daughter. He accepted responsibility for his child, and in after years remained in communication with both mother and daughter. Near the close of 1792, on the verge of risking his life as a leader of the Girondins, Wordsworth was recalled to England.

As the Revolution developed, he retained his faith in it long after its sinister events had brought disillusionment to many enthusiasts, including Coleridge. In 1793 he published his first poems, "An Evening Walk" (page 1; written probably in his college days) and "Descriptive Sketches of a Pedestrian Tour in the Alps." Without definite occupation and virtually homeless, for several years he visited friends and wandered through various parts of England and Wales, until, in 1795, a legacy rendered possible his dedication to poetry. With his sister Dorothy, whose affection and understanding made her one of the

leading influences on his life, he settled at Racedown, in the south of England, where he saw much of the young poet Coleridge, whose flexibility of heart and fancy helped much to set Wordsworth's stiffer genius flowing. In 1797, the Wordsworths, desiring to live close to Coleridge at Nether Stowey in Somerset, removed to Alfoxden. Here they became, as Coleridge says, "three persons and one soul," and here, through mutual stimulation, both Coleridge and Wordsworth found themselves and produced some of their greatest poetry. The direct result was a collaborative and anonymous volume entitled *Lyrical Ballads*, one of the epoch-making books in English literature, in which the artificial diction, the versification, and the frigid feeling of eighteenth-century poetry were decisively rejected and the new Romantic art was represented at its best in such poems as "The Ancient Mariner" (page 56) and "Lines Composed near Tintern Abbey" (page 6). According to the "Advertisement" that follows the title-page, most of the poems ("Simon Lee," for example; page 4) "were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure."

Shortly before *Lyrical Ballads* appeared in 1798, the Wordsworths and Coleridge sailed for Germany, where Wordsworth, retracing the growth of his mind, began the composition of his long poem "The Prelude" (page 9). Returning to England in 1799, he settled in the Lake District in which he had been born; and there he remained, with his sister and his wife Mary Hutchinson (he married in 1802), until his death half a century later, taking long tramps with Dorothy, working hard at his poems, seeing much of certain friends, and growing more and more conservative in his political and religious outlook on life.

In "The Prelude," completed at Grasmere in the Lake country when he was thirty-five years old, Wordsworth recounts the whole story of his early life—the unthinking activity of boyhood; the ecstasy of his youth in the presence of nature; his association with the plain and sturdy folk of the Cumberland mountains, and the

republican society of college men at Cambridge; his "bliss" at the dawn of the great Revolution and his experience later when he became part and parcel of that movement; his profound moral crisis when Britain made war upon the Revolution, and France invaded Switzerland, and Napoleon rose as dictator; the abandonment of his enthusiasm for a radical re-ordering of society in accordance with abstract reason; the healing influence of his sister and of the spirit of nature; and the deepening of his love for nature into a religion based on the conviction that joy is fundamental in the universe, and that man may win it, together with moral guidance, by responding to the influence of the world of nature. His old mainstay, the intellect, or logical faculty, is now discarded as intruding between the human soul and reality. It is not reason, but nature that leads us on, through our senses and feelings, to "see into the life of things." The period covered by "The Prelude" has been finely studied by Émile Legouis in *La jeunesse de William Wordsworth*, translated, in 1897, as *The Early Life of William Wordsworth*.

From this faith in nature, Wordsworth does not depart during the period of his greatest achievement, the decade from 1798 to 1808, although already in 1805, in the "Ode to Duty" (page 38), he strikes a new note. As he advances in years, he draws closer to the traditional view of man's moral constitution. By 1822 he publishes a long series of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, of slight importance as poetry, though comprising such sonorous pieces as "Mutability" (page 53) and "Inside of King's College Chapel" (page 53). And in his old age he turns more and more to the Church of England for the happy faith that he had previously found in human reason and in outward nature. A right attitude toward nature can come to men only through self-control and "grace divine," he now says in the lines "Not in the Lucid Intervals of Life" (page 54). Yet his quietly penetrating delight in natural beauty is still alive,— "a little unpretending rill of limpid water" (page 52):

"The immortal spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that rill, in vision clear."

AN EVENING WALK

In his note on this poem, Wordsworth says that when not more than fourteen years old he had a "consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them;" and that he "made a resolution to supply, in some degree, this deficiency." Actual and original observation of nature was rarely a chief aim in the pastoral poetry of the eighteenth century; see note on Rogers, above.

(1.) 101. *bright obscurity*: Compare the sense of Milton's phrase "dark with excessive bright" (*Paradise Lost*, III, 380). — The whole selection is concerned with the effect of the evening light, first upon the general landscape around the lake, and then upon the lake itself.

LINES LEFT UPON A SEAT

Instead of being sheer description like the preceding verses, this poem develops a twofold thought, which is suggested in the subtitle by the phrases, "desolate part of the shore" and "beautiful prospect." What does each of these phrases symbolize? See lines 8-32, and 33-46.

SIMON LEE

With this poem may be read Wordsworth's tale of "Peter Bell," written in the same year, and likewise devoted to extreme simplicity and sympathy. Peter is a "ruffian wild" who is converted, through sympathy for certain sufferers, into "a good and honest man." The chief and most interesting actor in the plot is a devoted Ass.

(4.) 66. *Such stores* etc.: stores of what, particularly? Does this stanza help or injure the poem, in your opinion?

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

(5.) 1. *a thousand blended notes*: Why does the poet begin with this particular image, rather than with one of those given in lines 9-20?

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

Wordsworth states that this poem and the next "arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy." On Wordsworth's own use of books, see the third sentence of the biography, page 655.

30. *Conversing as I may*: Interpret this in the light of the three preceding stanzas; "conversing" does not here mean talking.

THE TABLES TURNED

(6.) 12. *more of wisdom*: What idea of wisdom is developed in the remaining stanzas, and where was it introduced in the preceding poem?

LINES COMPOSED NEAR TINTERN ABBEY

The trend of this great poem will become clearer if you can have in mind, by way of comparison, *your* experience of some familiar scene which you revisited after a considerable absence. Recall: (1) the main physical features of your scene, (2) what feelings you had for it in absence, (3) how it affected you in younger days when you first became familiar with it, and (4) your maturer attitude upon revisiting it. Such is the plan followed in the poem. But in the fourth part, the poet passes to nature in general (line 88), and to the sister who shared his experiences of nature (line 114), — returning to the present scene only near the close (line 150).

In substance, the poem is Wordsworth's whole experience of joy in nature condensed upon a particular scene and occasion, and poured out in an intense, ode-like chant. Mark the sentences in which the word "joy" occurs, and study them comparatively, observing that they form a series of wave-crests in the current of poetic thought. What is the special quality of Wordsworth's joy, as distinguished from other kinds? How is his joy related to his faith and conduct? Compare with the thought of the two preceding poems.

(8.) 88-102. *For I have learned — — rolls through all things*: Compare "Lines

Written in Early Spring," particularly the second and last stanzas (page 5).

(8.) 108. *the language of the sense*: See note to page 5, line 30, above.

148-149. *these gleams Of past existence*: See lines 116-120.

THE PRELUDE

PRESENCES OF NATURE IN BOYHOOD

Whereas in "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth is concerned with his youth and early manhood, here he looks back to his boyhood in the Lake District. He describes his boyish pastimes — mentioned cursorily in "Tintern Abbey," lines 73-74 (page 7) — and the mystic experiences which mingled with them. The whole theme is effectively gathered up in the closing apostrophe to the "Presences of Nature" (lines 464-475). — In what important way does Wordsworth's relation to nature in boyhood prefigure his relation to nature in early manhood as represented in "Tintern Abbey"?

(9.) 310. *springes*: snares.

DOWN THE SIMPLON PASS

(12.) 636. *Were all like workings of one mind*: Compare the preceding selection, lines 401-404.

656. *Fit resting-place*: how "fit"? — Observe the different nature of the waters, and of the poetic mood, in each of the three paragraphs.

THE POET AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Three phases of Wordsworth's political thought are here described: (1) growth, (2) disorder (line 176), and (3) healing (line 321). Each phase is summarized by the poet in the close of his treatment of it.

91-92. *Lodged only — — — in its bosom*: The beneficent forces in human society, though allied with the "Wisdom and Spirit of the universe," are not yet constant and safe, but are mixed with evil and subject to injury. This is the condition which the poet says he overlooked in his youthful inexperience, and in his optimism regarding political progress.

(14.) 176-180. *This threw — — — their contraries*: His love of his native land was changed to antipathy, and thus the proper groundwork of his expanded benevolence for all nations was shaken. Internationalism and patriotism conflicted. Moreover, his love of nature, which was inwoven with his love of his native country, was soured. This meant the corruption of the very source of all his sentiments (see lines 168-172).

216-222. *I adhered more firmly to old tenets* etc.: In his political theorizing he had previously been joyous and genial (see lines 105 ff, 155 ff); but now he became abstract, polemical, and self-deceptive.

282. *Friend*: Coleridge, to whom "The Prelude" was addressed.

NATURE'S HEALING

This should be read as a supplement to lines 333-356 of the preceding selection. In both cases, notice how the word "peace" comes into the climax. How was this state of inward serenity brought about, and what are its qualities? How was it reflected in "Tintern Abbey" (page 6)?

THE RECLUSE

The relation between "The Recluse" and "The Prelude" is hinted in the two titles. Wordsworth explains in his preface to "The Excursion" that "The Prelude" was conceived as a biographic introduction to a long philosophical poem "entitled 'The Recluse,' as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement." Only a portion of this work was written. The selection here given is "a kind of Prospectus of the design and scope of the whole Poem." It serves for us as an epitome of the full scope of Wordsworthian thought concerning the relationship of man and nature; and it is significant for the literature of the nineteenth century as a whole. In this connection may be read Emerson's tract on "Nature" (in the volume *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*) written thirty-five years later.

(17.) 766. *numerous*: rhythmical, melodious. Thus used in "Paradise Lost," V, 150.

(18.) 776-783. "*fit audience*" etc.: The allusions are to Milton's beautiful invocation to Urania, his "Heavenly Muse," in "Paradise Lost," VII, 1-39, which may be read in this connection. — Throughout the rest of the paragraph Wordsworth alludes to various physical features of the story of "Paradise Lost," and throws his own poetic method into contrast.

787. *empyreal*: pertaining to the empyrean or highest heaven, which consisted, in the old belief, of purest fire and light.

807-808. *shall find* — — — *common day*: The happy regions of old fable are merely fanciful anticipations of the joy which shall be a natural part of everyday life; cf. line 771.

824. *argument*: theme. This refers to the whole subject of lines 805-824: the true and joyous harmony of men, and Man, with nature, to be achieved through love and intellect. This thought is the outcome and consummation of the poet's developing experiences shown in "Tintern Abbey" and the selections from "The Prelude."

832. *barricadoed*: barricaded. The idea is that city evils, with fearful power, hold out against alleviating forces. Wordsworth's experiences during the 1790's had sharpened his perception of the strength of evil; see note to page 12, lines 91-92, above.

(19.) 837-838. *the human Soul* — — — *things to come*: cf. Shakespeare's "prophetic soul Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come" (Sonnets, No. 107). But notice that Wordsworth is invoking, not this "Soul," but the "prophetic Spirit" (line 836) that inspires it. The whole invocation (lines 836-860) may fruitfully be compared, as to tone and idea, with the two great invocations in "Paradise Lost": I, 1-26; and III, 1-55.

THE LUCY POEMS

It is not known whether the poet had an actual girl in mind. (For an interesting discussion of this question, see Harper's

William Wordsworth, I, 377-78.) But it is clear that, written during a visit to Germany, the poems are very largely the outcome of a nostalgic mood, — a yearning, mixed with sadness, for familiar scenes. In respect to mood and imagery, compare the second and third poems with Rogers' "A Wish" (page 1).

(20.) 64-68. *Both law and impulse* — — — *To kindle or restrain*: This dual influence of nature appears also in Wordsworth's account of his own childhood in "The Prelude" (page 9).

MICHAEL

Underneath its plain, actualistic surface, this poem is a deeply imaginative fiction, turning upon a single character-creation. "I have attempted," wrote Wordsworth after finishing it, "to give a picture of a man of strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart: the parental affection; and the love of landed property, including the feelings of inheritance, home, and personal and family independence." Two separate incidents from actual life helped to suggest the plot, and are brought together in the course of it: the disloyalty of the dissolute son of an old couple, of whom the poet had heard; and the laborious erection of a stone sheepfold by an aged shepherd. And of course many objects long familiar to the poet's own eyes are woven in. But the story itself is a new creation; and its value resides in its central character and atmosphere. Observe how the other two personages, and each successive object and occurrence, are subordinated to that character and atmosphere.

To what extent does the poem illustrate Wordsworth's purposes as declared in "The Recluse," lines 809-835 (pages 18-19)?

(21.) 2. *Ghyll*: (commonly spelled "gill") a ravine or chasm in a hill, generally containing a rapid stream. While composing the poem Wordsworth was accustomed to take the walk here described, — stopping to rest, and to write, near the remains of the sheepfold (line 17).

(22.) 76-77. *A pleasurable feeling — — in life itself*: This kind of pleasure in nature together with firm character belongs also to Wordsworth himself, and has appeared in the previous poems in this book. It underlies and colors his *thinking* about nature.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

(30.) 43-44. *Chatterton — — in his pride*: Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), who committed suicide.

45-46. *him who walked — — the mountain-side*: Robert Burns (1759-1796).

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING

(32.) 9. *Dear Child*: the poet's French daughter, Caroline.

13. *the temple's inner shrine*: Compare the metaphor of "the sanctuary" in "The Prelude," Book Eleventh, line 91 (page 12).

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

(33.) 4. *eldest child of Liberty*: Venice was founded in the fifth century, and, when conquered by Napoleon in 1797, had been an independent republic for a millennium.

8. *espouse the everlasting Sea*: alluding to the old annual ceremony of wedding the Adriatic, when the Doge threw a ring into the sea.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

Toussaint (1743-1803), negro revolutionary leader in the island of Haiti or San Domingo, and afterwards able governor in the name of France, tried to make the island completely independent. He was defeated by Napoleon's forces in 1802 and imprisoned in France.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

This and the next sonnet were composed on the poet's return from a visit to France, when he was struck, he says, "with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France."

LONDON, 1802

9. *Thy soul — — dwelt apart*: Wordsworth aspires to the same sort of life for himself, and uses an analogous image, in "The Recluse," line 842 and context (page 19).

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

In what respect does this poem recall "Three Years She Grew" (page 20)?

(36.) 74-78. *till I grow old* etc.: "The sort of prophecy with which the verses conclude has, through God's goodness, been realized; and now, approaching the close of my 73rd year, I have a most vivid remembrance of her and the beautiful objects with which she was surrounded" (from Wordsworth's note).

THE SOLITARY REAPER

While similar in subject to the preceding, this poem has supreme lyric concentration, and is magical in its music and suggestiveness. Like other great lyrics — e.g., the next poem, "To the Cuckoo" — it is not a transcript of a single experience, but a distillation from many. The immediate impulse to write it came from the following fine sentence which Wordsworth read in a book by a friend: "Passed a female who was reaping alone; she sung in Erse, as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard; her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious long after they were heard no more" (from Thomas Wilkinson's *Tour in Scotland*). The poet himself, during

the Highland tour in 1803 which produced the preceding poem, had seen many "small companies of reapers."

TO THE CUCKOO

(37.) 16. *A voice, a mystery*: What feature of the preceding poem is recalled? What else of emotion and method have the two poems in common?

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

The subject is the poet's wife.

I WANDERED LONELY

This poem resembles the preceding in rhythm and general movement,—passing from a sensuous to a reflective delight, but recapturing its brighter movement in the closing couplet.

The closing stanza recalls Wordsworth's statement that good poetry, though a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," nevertheless "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity" (preface to *Lyrical Ballads*). In his own case at least, the excitement of composition was preceded by much tranquil reflection, aided by a strong visual memory. See "Tintern Abbey," lines 22-30 (page 7); and note to page 36, line 74, above.

ODE TO DUTY

"This ode is on the model of Gray's Ode to Adversity, which is copied from Horace's Ode to Fortune" (from Wordsworth's note). In spirit, too, the poet here approaches classical tradition. His final stanza closely resembles Gray's. But a comparison of the two poems as wholes will throw into vivid relief Wordsworth's personal emphasis and originality.

He seeks in this piece a harmony of free personal joy and lawgiving duty. The course of his thought may be indicated, stanza by stanza, as follows:—

(1) Duty, as lawgiver, is stern.

(2) But there are happily constituted persons who, without conscious effort at dutifulness, are generally led aright by "the genial sense of youth" (line 12; cf. "genial spirits" in "Tintern Abbey," line 113, page 8). The meaning is: a youthful, vital kindliness and joy).

(3) Indeed, it is the proper destiny of human nature that love and joy shall become unerring guides (cf. "The Recluse," lines 800-808, page 18). Even now, it is happiness to shape one's life "in the spirit of this creed," yet seeking whenever necessary the support of Duty.

(4) The need of such support the poet has discovered in his own experience. Generally, his native disposition has led him aright (cf. "Tintern Abbey," lines 107-111, page 8; also "The Recluse," lines 772-775, page 18).

(5) But this "unchartered freedom"—i.e. freedom unrestricted by devotion to Duty's laws—has led him into bondage of impulses (e.g., see "Resolution and Independence," stanzas iv, vi, page 30). Thus the serene repose of spirit which is the very goal of his creed has not been firmly achieved (see lines 17, 40; also the note on "Nature's Healing," page 658, above).

(6) He therefore turns to Duty, and finds now that, while stern, she is also benign, beautiful, and vital,—related to nature's order and strength.

(7) Guidance and strength for himself he seeks from her. Through increased humility and readiness to sacrifice his desires, he hopes to increase in wisdom and the "confidence of reason" (in contrast with the kind of confidence referred to in lines 27-28). As "bondman" of Duty, he will be free "in the light of truth" (cf. lines 3, 7).

ELEGIAC STANZAS

This poem also shows the poet modifying, so to speak, his "creed" of joy; see note on the "Ode to Duty," above, section (3). But here the "new control" to which he submits himself (line 34) is grief and fortitude. The occasion for the poem was the death of his brother John.

(39.) 1, *thy neighbor once*: Wordsworth spent part of a college vacation on the coast of Lancashire near Peele Castle.

18. *how different from this*: i.e. from the stormy setting in Beaumont's painting. The poet would have put into his own picture the serene, untried idealism of his youth.

57-58. *But welcome — — — to be borne*: Cf. "The Recluse," lines 825-835 (pages 18-19).

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

The full subject of the poem is not so well indicated by the title as by the motto,—adopted by Wordsworth from "My Heart Leaps Up" (see page 32). By "natural piety," in this context, he probably means a spontaneous reverence for the high things in, and symbolized in, nature. Such devotion, persisting throughout the changing years of his life, can bind them together in one high meaning. The same idea runs through "Tintern Abbey," but here it is developed more explicitly, and with an ecstasy and changeless harmony that demanded irregular stanzas instead of blank verse.

Following is a topical outline of the Ode, according to stanzas:—

(I, II) The "celestial light" upon natural objects, and its departure from them.

(III, IV) The poet's regret for it, amid a joyous May scene.

(V, VI) Its origin in heavenly existence before birth; its fading, as the child grows to manhood.

(VII, VIII) The child imitating man's affairs, and thus preparing to lose it.

(IX) Its persistence in manhood as a dim feeling, but with power to nourish the man's insight into that which is eternal.

(X) The poet's resultant joy amid the May scene; his determination to find strength in the feeling continued from childhood together with the insight gained in manhood.

(XI) His devotion to natural objects, persisting from childhood to manhood; the sober coloring (instead of the "celestial light") thrown upon them by his deepened experience of human emotions.

A general question for discussion: what of the experience in this poem is more or less peculiar to Wordsworth, and what of it is common to many?

(40.) 4-5. *celestial light — — — of a dream*: the fresh, dreamy, sometimes mystical wonder of a child in regard to the world around him. Compare the following passages, where such wonder, or the spirit within us that inspires it, is alluded to in varying terms: lines 18, 56-57, 64-74, 83, 118-122, 129-132, 141-151, 175-178, 180-182, 190. — Observe that the "celestial light" is quite distinct from esthetic or poetic appreciation, which remains (see stanza II) when it is gone. "To that dream-like vividness and splendor which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony" (from Wordsworth's note).

25. *The cataracts — — — the steep*: Cf. the waterfalls in "Down the Simplon Pass," lines 626-629 (page 12).

28. *The winds — — — of sleep*: i.e. the west winds—why?

51-55. *But there's a tree etc.*: The poet recalls the look—so different from their present look—which the tree, field, and pansy wore for him in early years.

(41.) 58-65. *Our birth is but a sleep etc.*: Before answering the question asked at the close of the preceding stanza, as to *whither* "the visionary gleam" has gone, the poet tells *whence* it came. Concerning the idea of pre-existence, he says in his note: "It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation [i.e. the Bible], there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of Man presents an analogy in its favor. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the creeds of many nations; and among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy — — — I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet." — For Plato's idea of pre-existence, see his "Phaedo," sections 72-77 (Jowett's trans-

lation), where this matter is taken up as part of the whole subject of human immortality; see also his "Phaëdrus." For an example of the idea in previous English poetry, see "The Retreat" of Henry Vaughan (1622-1695).

(41.) 68-70. *the growing Boy* — — — *in his joy*: In Wordsworth's account of his own boyhood in "The Prelude," the "celestial light" may be traced; but in addition to delighted wonder, the discipline of action and fear in his relations with nature is emphasized (see lines 1-2, 410-414, pages 9-10).

71-74. *The Youth* — — — *attended*: Cf. Wordsworth's feeling for nature in youth as represented in "Tintern Abbey," lines 65-85 (page 7).

103. "*humorous stage*": humorous means moody. The context shows that this alludes to the speech beginning "All the world's a stage" in Shakespeare's "As You Like It," II, vii, 139 ff.

118-119. *Thou, over whom thy immortality* etc.: Cf. the last six lines of the sonnet "It is a Beauteous Evening," page 32.

(42.) 127-128: *And custom* — — — *as life*: Notice the connected and cumulative suggestions of weight, cold, and depth. Compare the speech beginning "That monster, custom" in "Hamlet," II, iv, 161 ff. — But whereas Shakespeare dwells also upon the creative value of custom for the individual life, the majority of writers from Wordsworth's time on, have emphasized only its deadening effects: e.g., Emerson's essay on "Self-Reliance," paragraphs 6-11.

134, 139, 141, 148. *not indeed For* — — *Not for* — — *But for* — — *But for*: These connectives indicate the structure of this involved sentence.

141-147. *those obstinate questionings* etc.: "I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of

an opposite character" (from Wordsworth's note.)

143. *Fallings from us, vanishings*: "I was sure of my own mind; everything fell away and vanished into thought" (from a comment by Wordsworth). — The root of this condition, and of his belief in immortality, was "a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit within me" (from Wordsworth's note).

151. *yet*: still, i.e., in manhood; cf. "yet" in line 189.

181. *primal sympathy*: This probably comprises both his inborn feeling for nature and his inborn "intimation of immortality." See the remark on "natural piety" in the introductory note on this poem, above.

183. *In the soothing* — — — *human suffering*: Cf. "Tintern Abbey," lines 90-93 (page 8).

(43.) 202-203. *To me the meanest flower* — — — *for tears*: i.e., by symbolizing something of the human feeling mentioned in the preceding lines. See the first stanza of the second poem "To the Daisy" (page 34).

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

"The course of the great war with the French naturally fixed one's attention upon the military character" (from Wordsworth's note). Compare the sonnet "I grieved for Buonaparté," written four years earlier and exhibiting the same two-sided thought as the present poem. The poet's musings (1) upon public men, and (2) upon his own and similar lives, flow together here in a sketch of the spirit of the ideal statesman — for this, rather than the narrower subject indicated by the title, is the real theme of the piece.

5. *the plan* — — — *boyish thought*: a high ideal of human service cherished in boyhood. In this poem, as in the preceding, "The Child is father of the Man," and the progress of a life from boyhood to age is indicated.

15-16. *a power* — — — *highest dower*: It is this power (what is it?) that draws together, throughout the remainder

of the poem, the different qualities of the "Happy Warrior," and the successive phases of his career.

NUNS FRET NOT

(44.) 13. *Who have — — too much liberty*: Cf. "Ode to Duty," lines 37-38 (page 38). This motive, together with the influence of Milton (acknowledged by Wordsworth in his note on the present poem), had drawn the poet's interest to the sonnet-form, which had been little used since the Renaissance.

PERSONAL TALK, III

(45.) 41-42. *The gentle Lady — — milk-white lamb*: Desdemona in Shakespeare's "Othello;" and Una, a lady representing heavenly truth, in Spenser's "Faerie Queene," Book First, stanzas 4-5. For contrast with the personal themes of ordinary gossip, the poet names two that suggest purity, gentleness, and elevation.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

5-7. *The Sea — — sleeping flowers*: Notice the particular image and mood conveyed in each of these three lines. (46.) 13-14. *Proteus — — Triton*: sea-deities in Greek mythology. The poet would rather be an ancient pagan with a feeling for the divine meaning in nature, than a modern materialistic Christian with none. Compare the two London sonnets (page 33).

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON SWITZERLAND

This country was conquered by the French in 1798; and by 1807 Napoleon had mastered Europe, excepting England, whose liberty he was planning to restrict.

SURPRISED BY JOY

(47.) 3. *thee*: the poet's daughter, Catherine, long dead.

LAODAMIA

"I wrote with the hope of giving it [the myth of Laodamia] a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been given to it by any of the Ancients who have treated of it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written." (48.) 71. *Erebus*: here synonymous with Hades, the abode of the dead.

74-76. *the Gods — — love*: Cf. "Tintern Abbey," lines 47-49 (page 8). — This is the keynote of the present poem; compare the whole stanza with lines 139-150.

AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOR

For the development of Wordsworth's spirit and art, compare this sunset ode, written in the close of his great period, with the description of the sunset in "An Evening Walk" (page 1), written before he had found himself.

(50.) 8. *What is? — — can be*: The scene reflects a higher beauty than can appear in external nature; cf. lines 34-40, 53-54.

9-15. *Time was when field etc.*: Cf. Milton's "Paradise Lost," IV, 677-688.

(51.) 43-46. *You hazy ridges etc.*: "The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third stanza of this ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapors, or sunny haze, — in the present instance by the latter cause" (from Wordsworth's note).

61-80. *such hues etc.*: This stanza, as Wordsworth himself notes, is pervaded by allusions to the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" (page 40).

TO A SKYLARK

(52.) 8-10. *A privacy — — more divine*: "since God is Light, And never but in unapproached light Dwelt from eternity" ("Paradise Lost," III, 3-5).

A LITTLE UNPRETENDING RILL

(52.) 10. *Emma*: the poet's sister, Dorothy.

AFTER-THOUGHT

Like others (e.g., Spenser in "The Faerie Queene," Book Seventh; Shakespeare in "The Tempest," IV, i, 148-158), Wordsworth felt more solemnly, as he advanced in middle age, the transitoriness of earthly things and persons,—"sad mortality's earth-sullying wing" (see "November 1," page 47). An undertone of this goes through "An Evening of Extraordinary Splendor" (page 50), and "Laodamia" (see especially lines 68-72, page 48). (52.) 1. *thee*: The River Duddon.

MUTABILITY

(53.) 1-6. *From low to high* etc.: Earthly things,—now great, now little,—pass away in continuous succession, like notes in a melancholy piece of music. But through all runs a constant harmony—a spiritual meaning—which can be heard by those who keep free of evil, and are not too much concerned in earthly things.

7-8. *Truth fails not; but her outward forms* etc.: Cf. line 6 of the preceding poem.

KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL

1. *the royal Saint*: King Henry Sixth (1421-1471), the founder of this college.

SCORN NOT THE SONNET

See the note on "Nuns Fret Not" (page 664, above).

4. *Petrarch's wound*: his love for his Laura.

6. *Camões*: Portugal's great poet (1524-1580) was in exile for seventeen years.

THE TROSACHS

This romantic valley in the Scottish Highlands was visited by Wordsworth in

the autumn of 1831. The season is worked into the mood of the sonnet (see lines 3, 11). Also, see the note on "After-Thought" (column opposite).

"THERE!" SAID A STRIPLING

(54.) 4-8. *Far and wide* etc.: Cf. "Tintern Abbey," lines 4-8 (page 7). What other important images of Wordsworthian serenity do you recall?—Different was Robert Burns (1759-1796), poet of restless passion. "It is remarkable that, though Burns lived some time here, and during much the most productive period of his poetical life, he nowhere adverts to the splendid prospects stretching towards the sea and bounded by the peaks of Arran on one part, which in clear weather he must have had daily before his eyes" (from Wordsworth's note).

9. *random bield*: chance shelter. The quoted words are from Burns's poem "To a Mountain Daisy, on Turning one down with the Plough," which is alluded to throughout the remainder of this sonnet.

MOST SWEET IT IS

7-8. *slipping in between* etc.: This phrase qualifies both "scene" and "tone" in the preceding lines.

13. *The Mind's internal heaven*: See the last stanza of "I Wandered Lonely" (page 38), and the note on that poem.

NOT IN THE LUCID INTERVALS

1-2. *lucid intervals* — — — *to party-strife*: periods of calm regarded only as a curse by a striving politician.—The idea of lines 1-7 is that worldlings absorbed in ambition, pleasure, or business cannot, in minutes of open-air leisure, feel the best values of nature.

(55.) 7-15. *nor do words* etc.: "Written with Lord Byron's character, as a poet, before me, and that of others, his contemporaries, who wrote under like influences."

12-13. *if he dare* — — — *passion's sake*: if he presumes to believe that the

craving for vivid feeling is the ultimate principle of life; cf. "Laodamia," lines 74-75, 145-150 (page 48-50).

(55.) 14-15. *meekness* — — — *truly great*: Cf. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The word "meekness" has not here its negative meaning of pliant submissiveness, as in popular usage. It means the hard attainment of inward humility and gentleness through self-control, which "the truly great" cherish as their leading principle (instead of the one mentioned in the preceding note).

16-31. *But who is innocent* etc.: Is Wordsworth's view of nature in relation to God and morality the same here, essentially, as in "Tintern Abbey," lines 93-111 (page 8), or different? Compare also "Presences of Nature in Boyhood," lines 401-414 (page 10); "Down the Simplot Pass," lines 624-640 (page 12); and "The Recluse," lines 836-860 (page 19).

25. *that bounded field*: the external Universe with all its beauties, as described in the preceding lines. — Compare the view of serenity and peace given in lines 24-31 with the view given in earlier poems; see the note on "Nature's Healing" (page 658, above).

PROTEST AGAINST THE BALLOT

For the general standpoint, see lines 10-14 of the preceding poem. The spirit of political conservatism grew very strong in England during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, owing to the excesses of the French Revolution; and was shared by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other of the elder writers. The spirit of liberalism — shared by Byron, Shelley, and other writers of the new generation — became clamorous in the second decade. A Radical party was formed in 1819; but no signal effects were achieved until 1830. In that year, revolutions occurred in France and elsewhere, and the Whigs came into power in England. The Reform Act of 1832 (alluded to in lines 1-5 of this sonnet) shifted the balance of political power in England from the landed gentry to the manufacturers and merchants. In 1838 (the year of the sonnet)

the People's Charter, drawn up by Radical and working-class leaders, demanded manhood suffrage and vote by ballot.

(56.) 12. *Pandorian gift*: a punning allusion to the box of troubles opened by Pandora, the classical Eve.

WHO PONDER'S NATIONAL EVENTS

Wordsworth is usually preoccupied with the beautiful and orderly powers of nature, as imaging the best in human nature (e.g., "Ode to Duty," lines 41-48, page 38). Here, pondering in old age the evils of national life, he thinks of nature's destructive forces (line 7). But he condemns the doctrine that similar forces operate as by natural necessity in human society. He intimates that man is most "divine" (compare lines 5 and 13) when his "Will," guided by "Conscience" and "Truth," operates "to control and check disordered powers." — See the context of this poem, in "Miscellaneous Sonnets of 1842," Numbers IV-VI, written in allusion to recent views of the French Revolution. The famous history of this event by Thomas Carlyle had appeared in 1837.

9-11. *But woe* — — — *social havoc*: See "The Poet and the French Revolution," lines 162-163 and context (page 13).

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

Son of a Devonshire clergyman, Coleridge in his childhood was addicted (so he tells us) to dreaming, to sloth, and to passionate sensibility. Already the mind of the future Transcendental philosopher and poet was "habituated to the Vast;" he never regarded his senses, he adds, "in any way the *criteria* of my belief." Leaving his country home before his tenth birthday, he entered the old London school known as Christ's Hospital; and here he formed a lasting friendship with his fellow-student Charles Lamb, acquired "a rage for metaphysics," — reading precociously in Voltaire and the Neo-Platonists, — and dreamed, as he says in "Frost at Midnight" (page 76),

"Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower."

In October, 1791, while the National Assembly was in its first sessions in France, Coleridge began his college career. At Jesus College, Cambridge, he adopted the radical politics of the Revolution, continued his voracious but desultory reading, acquired debts, and suffered disappointed love. Unceremoniously leaving the University after two years, he enlisted in a regiment of dragoons; but, having "a violent antipathy to soldiers and horses," he presently returned to Cambridge, though in the end he left without taking a degree.

With Southey, a youthful radical at Oxford who ultimately became Poet Laureate, he planned an ideal community or "Pantisocracy" to be established on the banks of the Susquehanna in America—a scheme that soon proved impracticable and resulted only in the marriage of Coleridge and Southey to the Fricker sisters, who were to have been their partners in the enterprise. For Coleridge the union proved unhappy,—more through his own deficiency, it would appear, than through that of Sarah Fricker,—and during most of his subsequent life he was rarely with his wife and children. In the main, the story of his later years is one of domestic infelicity, poverty alleviated by gifts from warm friends, abortive enterprises, fragmentary accomplishments, mental depression, physical illness, and "slavery" (his own word) to opium.

Before the shadows of his life darkened, however, there was one burst of golden happiness,—that idyllic year with the Wordsworths in the Quantock Hills of Somerset. He loved Wordsworth, and admired his powers with unbounded enthusiasm; and daily intercourse, daily rhapsodical confidences and speculation, in which the eloquent Coleridge doubtless did most of the talking, at length made possible "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (page 56),—his chief contribution to *Lyrical Ballads* and one of the masterpieces of the "renaissance of wonder." In their plan for *Lyrical Ballads* the two poets divided the realm of wonder into the natural and the supernatural. While Wordsworth was "to give the charm of

novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us," Coleridge, on the other hand, was to deal with "persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (*Biographia Literaria*, ch. 14). In a word, Wordsworth was to render the natural magical, and Coleridge the magical natural.

This division of the province of romance really constitutes a definition of the divergent art of the two poets; and, a more organic collaboration having been given up, Wordsworth and Coleridge henceforth made their attack upon custom, routine, and the "meddling intellect," each in his own way. Within but a few months Coleridge composed most of his best work, including, in addition to the "Ancient Mariner," the first part of "Christabel" (page 64), "Frost at Midnight" (page 76), "Kubla Khan" (page 72), and "France: An Ode" (page 74). The last of these, written in February, 1798, and originally published as "The Recantation," marks the extinction of Coleridge's enthusiasm for revolutionary France and his perception that

"The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain."

For some time previous his enthusiasm had been waning; when "Citizen" Thelwall visited him at Nether Stowey, rousing the suspicions of orthodox neighbors, he had found himself out of sympathy with his friend's radical views and definitely moving toward that conservatism which, as in the case of Wordsworth, more and more determined his outlook upon life.

When at length the Somerset idyll terminated in the expedition to Germany, his years of poetic plenty were at an end. Possessing, from childhood onward, strong religious instincts, fond of the Neoplatonic mystics and of Boehme, Coleridge early became a Unitarian, even trying for a pas-

torate; and his increasing devotion to philosophy was religious in spirit. While Wordsworth at Goslar was brooding over his past and pluming his wings for "The Prelude," Coleridge, having matriculated at the University of Göttingen, was devouring German literature and German philosophy; and after his return to England he dedicated himself, in his wholehearted but ineffectual way, to the task of solving at the same time the final problems of both philosophy and religion. He gave not a little promise, in his public lectures and in his prose writings, of becoming one of the great leaders of modern thought; but his temperamental weaknesses, and the manifold ills that are mainly traceable to them, virtually frustrated his powers. Within four years the joyous enthusiasm of the *Lyrical Ballads* days had lapsed to the mood of "Dejection: An Ode" (page 78). Although there are wonderful passages of eloquence and insight in his subsequent prose works, in the main his "afflictions" bowed him "down to earth," and his later prose and poetry alike are but a shadow of what lay unrealized in him.

THE ANCIENT MARINER

For Coleridge's artistic purpose in writing the poem, see the fourth paragraph of the biography (page 667 above). In form, it is imitative of the old ballads; many of the archaisms of the 1798 version, however,—such as "yspread," "withouten," "Ancyent Marinere,"—were subsequently removed.

"Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention; but certain parts," says Wordsworth, "I myself suggested:—for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution,—as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's *Voyages*, a day or two before, that, while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thir-

teen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose and adopted accordingly." Later, Coleridge was apparently doubtful of the advisability of this heightening of the moral significance of the narration. "Mrs. Barbauld once told me," he said, "that she admired 'The Ancient Mariner' very much, but that there were two faults in it,—it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question: but as to the want of a moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much; and that the only, or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the *Arabian Nights'* tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant *because* one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son."

Quotations in the notes, below, are from the marginal glosses added by Coleridge in 1815-1816.

(57.) 101-102. *'Twas right* etc.: They "thus make themselves accomplices in the crime."

106. *that silent sea*: "The ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line" (i.e. the Equator).

(58.) 141-142. *Instead of the cross* etc.: "The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the Mariner."

(59.) 197. *I've won*: "Death and Life-in-Death have dined for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the Mariner."

226-227. *And thou — — — sea-sand*: These two lines were contributed by Wordsworth.

(60.) 263-266. *The moving Moon* etc.: "In his loneliness and fixedness, he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move on-

ward; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country, and their own natural homes."

(61.) 379. *The spirit*: "The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance."

397. *Two voices in the air*: "The Polar Spirit's fellow-daemons, the invisible inhabitants of the element [the air], take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward."

(62.) 422-423. *But why drives on* etc.: "The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure."

(63.) 535. *ivy-tod*: ivy-bush.

(64.) 614-617. *He prayeth best*, etc.: This is the sequel to lines 236-247, 282-288. For Wordsworth's early doctrine of sympathy, see note on "Simon Lee" (page 657, above).

CHRISTABEL

Here the magical atmosphere at which Coleridge aimed is conveyed quite as successfully as in "The Ancient Mariner," and far more delicately.

PART I

22. *And the Spring — — — this way*: This would apply to northern England, the scene of Part II, although Part I is not definitely localized.

(66.) 129-132. *The lady sank — — — of the gate*: Evil spirits were supposed unable to cross, in their own power, a Christian threshold.

142. *I cannot speak*: Observe that Geraldine will not include herself in the "we" of line 139, i.e., will not join in thanks to the Virgin Mary.

153. *For what can ail*: Animals were regarded as feeling the presence of spirits.

159. *A tongue of light*: The very fire responds to the presence of the witch.

PART II

(69.) 408-426. *Alas! they had been friends*: This famous digression on broken friendship is a fine expression of a profound emotion. Two of Coleridge's deepest attachments were broken — that with Poole and that with Wordsworth, though both were restored.

CONCLUSION TO PART II

Here, perhaps Coleridge projected a retrospective passage (like the Conclusion to Part I) touching first upon the Baron's light rebukes to Christabel in her childhood, and then leading back to his present anger at her.

James Gillman, friend and biographer of the poet, records that Coleridge intended to carry the story through a third and fourth part as follows: — Old Bracy the bard finds only the ruins of Lord Roland's castle, and hastens to return with the news that Geraldine's story must be false. She, in the meantime, has been artfully fomenting Sir Leoline's suspicion and anger against his daughter. But being aware, like the witches in "Macbeth," of all that is happening, Geraldine changes her appearance, on Bracy's return, to that of Christabel's absent lover (see lines 27-30, 292-297). The girl feels, without knowing why, a great disgust for the courtship of her once favored knight. But, urged by her father, she at length consents to marriage. As the couple approach the altar, however, the real lover enters, and produces a ring that Christabel had once given him. Thereupon the supernatural being "Geraldine" disappears. The castle bell tolls (see lines 198-201), the mother's voice is heard, the rightful marriage takes place, and the story closes upon the concord of father and daughter.

KUBLA KHAN

Coleridge tells us that this poem came to him in a dream induced by an "anodyne," — opium. He had just been reading, in an old book of travels, a prose description of the "sumptuous house of pleasure" (as it was called in the book) and its

surroundings. The main features of this description Coleridge borrows, investing them, however, with his magical imagery and incomparable music. The earthly paradise pictured in the poem may be regarded as an expression of the immemorial tendency of the human heart to seek a refuge from the ills of life by creating a world closer to the heart's desire.

Kubla Khan was the founder, in the thirteenth century, of the Mongol dynasty of China. Xanadu, or "Zaindu" (as the old book gave it), is a region in Tartary. Mount Abora, in line 41, has not been identified with certainty, and may have been invented by Coleridge.

FRANCE: AN ODE

Compare with Wordsworth's poems bearing on political ideas, especially the passage from "The Prelude" (pages 12-17). Wordsworth clung to his faith in the French Revolution longer than Coleridge, whose more pliant nature responded early to the conservative reaction. The present poem he originally entitled "The Recantation." He abandons his earlier hope of witnessing the reign of liberty in human society, without, however, relinquishing his faith in "The spirit of divinest Liberty" (line 21) present in nature. There it may still be joyously felt by the pure in heart when they approach "all things with intensest love" (line 104).

First the poet calls upon free nature to bear witness that he has ever worshipped the spirit of Liberty. In the second stanza, he expresses his early enthusiasm for the Revolution, an enthusiasm that continued after the Allies, including his own country, waged war upon the French Revolutionists. In the third stanza, he indicates that his hope for the regeneration of the world by France survived even the wild excesses of the movement—behind the storms "The Sun was rising." In the fourth, he laments that France, the "Champion of human kind," should have fallen so low as to invade free Switzerland and thus show herself no better than kings pursuing "the low lust of sway." And in the concluding stanza, perceiving that champions of lib-

erty are all too likely to be slaves at heart, at bottom enemies to their own cause, he turns sadly, yet joyously, to nature, where the spirit of liberty is pure and unsullied. (76.) 95-96. *Alike from Priestcraft's etc.*: the mean-souled tyranny of the church and the equally mean-souled tyranny of the sect of atheists. In 1793 the "Goddess of Reason" was enthroned in Notre Dame.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

Writing at his cottage in Nether Stowey, Coleridge meditates on "extreme silentness;" and looks back to his boyhood years in "the great city" (London), and forward to his son Hartley's wanderings "like a breeze" by lakes and mountains. (77.) 26. *that fluttering stranger*: soot adhering to the bars of the grate and pre-saging, according to superstition, the approach of a visitor.

DEJECTION: AN ODE

(78.) 40. *what can these*: i.e., the clouds, stars, etc., of the preceding stanza. The beauties of nature cannot alleviate his depression.

(79.) 67-69. *Joy, Lady — — — new Heaven*: This sentence resumes the image of the "wedding-garment" in line 49, and sums up the thought of the intervening lines: only the highest kind of human joy can so marry Nature to our spirits as to invest her with the highest beauty and meaning.—Throughout these two stanzas Coleridge has in mind the poetry and doctrines of Wordsworth, to whom this ode was originally addressed. But he makes more explicit than Wordsworth this double condition: the dependence of nature upon man's joy and, at the same time, of man's joy upon his purity of character. Compare, for instance, "Tintern Abbey" (page 6), "Most Sweet It Is" (page 54), and "Not in the Lucid Intervals" (page 54).

100. *mountain-tairn*: "tairn" is Scottish for "tarn."

(80.) 120. *as Otway's self*: as if Otway himself, viz., Thomas Otway, the seventeenth-century dramatist.

THE GARDEN OF BOCCACCIO

Coleridge's kind of imaginative memory, so to phrase it, can fruitfully be compared with Wordsworth's, as in the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" (page 40).

(82.) 5. *the numbing spell*: For the mood of lines 1-10, cf. "Dejection," stanza II (page 78). There, the poet could find no relief in nature; here, he can find none in "the Past."

14-18. *this exquisite design* etc.: an engraving by Thomas Stothard (1755-1834), entitled "The Garden of Boccaccio," in company with which this poem was published the next year in "The Keepsake." Details of the picture are alluded to from line 57 to the end.—*Boccaccio*: the great Italian narrator of the fourteenth century.

19. *a newly-bathed steep*: a high hill which has just been drenched with rain or fog. The sheep, quiet in the distance, are moving slowly down, out of a cloud of mist.—Following this image of sight, an image of sound (lines 20-22) carries on the quiet, gradual influence of the picture upon the poet. This influence, strong though soft, reaches his heart and dispels his apathy (lines 23-26). He can now turn with feeling to "the Past"; see note to line 5, above.

(83.) 28-56. *All spirits of power* etc.: Notice how they are given climactically, in these lines; and compare the powers that affected his younger life in "Youth and Age" (page 81).

38. *Hertha*: the Earth-goddess of North German mythology.

(84.) 98. *roll of old Maeonides*: copy of Homer's poems. Homer received the name Maeonides because he was supposed to have been born at Smyrna in Lydia, once called Maeonia.

EPITAPH

7. *Mercy for praise, to be forgiven for fame*: "for" here means "instead of."

LAMB: THE OLD FAMILIAR
FACES

The pauses should be emphasized in reading this poem, to bring out its harmony

of rhythmic and emotional tones. Comparable with it, in respect of winning gentleness, is Coleridge's poem to Lamb, "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," written in the preceding year. But peculiar to Charles Lamb (1775-1834) is his simple nostalgia of affection. It appears with humor, though still with pathos, in his *Essays of Elia*. It swayed his comments upon Shakespeare, and the other sixteenth and seventeenth century dramatists, who were worshipped and "revived" by Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Lamb,—proponents of so-called "Romantic criticism" in England.

(85.) 16. *Friend of my bosom*: Coleridge.

SOUTHEY: BATTLE OF BLEN-
HEIM

The humanitarian view of public troubles, which appears also in the greater poetry of his friends Coleridge and Wordsworth, is here rendered by Robert Southey (1774-1843) in a simple, satiric humor which they did not possess (see, for example, Wordsworth's "Lines in Early Spring," page 5). Four years earlier, he and Coleridge, under the inspiration of youth and the French Revolution, had planned a "Pantisocracy" (government by all) in the wilds of America, where public troubles were to be no more. But presently Southey settled down to the life of a voluminous writer of verse and prose, and became Poet Laureate in 1813. His *Life of Nelson* (1813), though too early to be reliable, is a classic for narrative interest. The best of his ambitious verse-romances,—regarded by him as *epical*,—is "The Curse of Kehama" (1810).

55-56. *Marlb'ro'* — — — *Eugene*: The Duke of Marlborough and the Austrian Prince Eugene led English and German forces against the French and Bavarians. The battle took place near Blenheim in 1704.

CAMPBELL: YE MARINERS OF
ENGLAND

This piece, so different in tone from the preceding, is here the first example of

that poetry of external action — battle and romantic adventure — which runs through the work of Southey, Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), Scott, Wolfe, and Byron. Campbell's "Hohenlinden" and "Battle of the Baltic," inspired like the present poem by the warfare that followed the French Revolution, have the same full-sounding vigor. His "Lord Ullin's Daughter" is a romantic ballad. On the other hand, his "Pleasures of Memory" (1799) continued the same eighteenth-century tradition as Rogers' "Pleasures of Memory" (see note on Rogers, page 655, above).

(86.) 10. *And the stormy winds do blow:* This verse originally read, "And the stormy tempests blow." What is the effect of the change?

15. *Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell:* When the poem was first published in "The Morning Chronicle," March 18, 1801, this verse read: "Where Blake, the boast of Freedom, fell." It was changed to its present form after Nelson fell at Trafalgar in 1805. — Robert Blake, Cromwell's great admiral, died in 1657.

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

Scott was born in Edinburgh, a city famed for its picturesque beauty and its memories of the past. Through his father, an attorney, and his mother, daughter of a professor in the University, he was descended from Border ancestors, to whose life in the stirring old days he early began to look back with deep interest. When but eighteen months old, he was lamed for life by a severe illness; and though eventually a robust man, he remained delicate for some years, gaining strength gradually at his grandfather's farm near the Tweed. "My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes — merry men all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John."

After his return to his father's house in Edinburgh, Scott's love of reading and of the past continued: in particular, he tells

us, he was drawn "by the wonderful and the terrible — the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day," — learning such passages by heart and reciting them aloud to others and to himself. While at the High School he read with avidity books of travel, history, poetry, fairy tales, romances, etc. ("Spenser," he says, "I could have read forever"); and shortly after leaving school he chanced upon a copy of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, the famous eighteenth century collection of old ballads, which he read "with a delight which may be imagined but cannot be described." As a student in Edinburgh University, Scott did not distinguish himself, — and ever afterwards, he says, felt himself "pinched and hampered" by his failure to acquire a "solid foundation of learning." Yet he was by no means idle; pursuing his own course, he read widely in balladry and romance in several languages, — a habit that he continued even after becoming a legal apprentice in his father's office. In 1792 he was called to the bar. Instead of seeking a large practice, however, he aimed at a position which would afford leisure for his favorite studies; and such a position he attained in 1799, when he was appointed sheriff of Selkirk. Before that year, he had already, in 1795, translated Bürger's ballad of "Lenore," and published it along with another poem translated from Bürger. In 1799 followed his translation of Goethe's early drama, "Goetz von Berlichingen."

Scott's first work of considerable importance, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, appeared in 1802. A work similar to Percy's *Reliques*, it originated in Scott's enthusiasm for the romantic background of his Border ancestry, and was carried to completion by his zeal in collecting ballads expressing the old Border traditions. It was followed in 1805 by his first important original work, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, — a verse-romance that reads like an amplified ballad. Then came *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*, through which he attained an international reputation. By means of his large financial returns from these poems, he was now enabled to buy Abbotsford, an estate on his beloved

Tweed; to adorn it after his heart's desire with symbols of the chivalric past; and to live the life of a noble and hospitable country gentleman, among his dogs and horses, and with picturesque landscapes on every side.

Having become the most prominent poet in Britain, Scott was now eclipsed by the new luminary, Lord Byron. "He beat me," says Scott, with an excess of both modesty and praise, "he beat me out of the field in descriptions of the stronger passions and in deep-seated knowledge of the human heart." From the narrative poem, Scott now definitely turned to the prose romance. Adapting to his own needs the art of the eighteenth-century English novelists, he finished *Waverley*, which he had begun years before; and so inaugurated the long series of "Waverley Novels," upon which his fame was destined to rest more securely than upon his verse. He wrote these novels with astonishing rapidity—a rapidity accelerated, in his last years, by the financial failure of his publishers and his voluntary effort to remove a debt of £117,000. The effort shortened his life; but at his death half the sum had been earned, and the rest was made up by subsequent royalties.

In all his writings Scott was largely an improviser; he composed with amazing facility, and earned nearly a million dollars by his pen—at the dear expense of quality. Rarely did he have that facility which the highest genius often attains, facility in conjunction with intensity and penetration; though he approximated it in scattered scenes of his novels, and in some of the lyrics included in his narrative poems. And his work as a whole, whatever its limitations, has that "health" or "harmony" which his countryman Carlyle held to be his most notable quality. Neither saint nor seer, Scott was a large, wholesome man.

The following quatrain, used by Scott as a motto for a chapter of *Old Mortality*, would serve admirably as a motto for his poems as a whole:

"Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,

One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name."¹

THE VIOLET

(86.) 4. *glen or copse or forest dingle*: Both glen and dingle are used for a narrow dale or valley, dingle for a small one especially. A copse is a grove of young trees.

THE EVE OF SAINT JOHN

1. *Smaylho'me*: Smallholm Tower, a romantic old castle in southern Scotland. It was familiar to Scott from childhood, and inspired this tale of the supernatural.

9. *plate-jack*: coat-armor.

10. *vaunt-brace*: armor protecting the arm from elbow to wrist.

11. *sperthe*: battle-ax.

(87.) 22. *acton*: jacket.

44. *eiry*: Scottish form of "eerie."

79. *rood-stone*: in medieval churches a rood, or cross, stood at the entrance of the chancel, often with a figure of the Virgin Mary at one side and a figure of Saint John at the other. "By the rood" was a phrase used in swearing.

(88.) 108. *Eildon-tree*: a tree of legendary fame on Eildon Hill, near Melrose.

123. *Dryburgh bells ring*: Dryburgh and Melrose are ruined abbeys not far apart in the Scott country.—This stanza repeats the plot-irony of lines 85-88.

127. *bartizan-seat*: a seat in an overhanging structure in the walls.

138. *Southron*: Scottish for Southerner, i.e., an Englishman.

141. *The lady blushed red*: For the reason, see the preceding stanza and lines 37-40.

¹Though Scott marked these lines "Anonymous," it has until recently been supposed that he wrote them himself; but they are now claimed for a Major Mordaunt, the writer of a poem in which they appear, published in *The Bee*, an Edinburgh literary weekly, in October, 1791. Scott substituted "To all" for the original "throughout" of the second line.

LOCHINVAR

"The ballad of 'Lochinvar' is in a very slight degree founded on a ballad called 'Katharine Janfarie,' which may be found in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*" (Scott).

(90.) 41. *scaur*: scar, or rock.

Songs from THE LADY OF THE LAKE

(91.) 53. *correi*: corrie, a hollow in the side of a mountain.

54. *cumber*: defeat, disastrous overthrow.

(92.) 65. *thy wizard elm*: alluding to the romantic scenery of "The Lady of the Lake," of which this lyric is the epilogue, and to the enchantment that the Muse of minstrel poetry exercised upon Scott; cf. "Enchantress" in the closing lines of the next two stanzas.

72-73. *And little reck I — — an idle lay*: Scott will feel little concern if he is foolishly censured for composing a story for the sake of the story. He makes no pretence at profundity of meaning (see again his self-depreciation in comparison with Byron, in the biography, page 673), but frankly loves such tales of stirring action as he himself narrates. He has found them, as he tells in the succeeding lines, a solace for life's care and griefs.

PROUD MAISIE

(94.) 7. *braw*: fine, smart, well-dressed.

BORDER SONG

11. *hirsels*: herds or flocks.

WOLFE: THE BURIAL OF SIR
JOHN MOORE

See note, above, on Campbell, whom Charles Wolfe (1791-1823) admired and studied. — Moore, distinguished British general in Spain, was forced by odds to retreat to Corunna, a fortified seaport,

which he occupied. Here he was killed in battle, 1809; and his army at once took ship for England, abandoning the town to the French.

"The plummet-like fall of the heavy syllables of grief, as into an unknown depth, and the elastic rise, proper to the anapaestic measure, of the lighter ones, as though for heroic consolation, are worthy of the masters" (Oliver Elton, *A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1830*, Vol. I).

THOMAS MOORE (1779-1852)

Intimate and afterwards biographer of Byron, Moore was almost as popular with contemporary readers. He too, as illustrated in these three poems, sang freedom, love, and sad memory. He lacked his friend's power; but with a sweeter disposition, and an easier lyric tunefulness of style, he excelled as a writer of songs. As much musician as poet, he retouched the popular tunes of his native Ireland, and made verses for them. Of his Oriental tales, which are far less genuine, the most interesting is "Lalla Rookh" (1817).

THE HARP THAT ONCE

Tara, near Dublin, figures largely in Irish tale and verse as an ancient seat of kings.

OFT, IN THE STILLY NIGHT

(97.) 2, 12, 26. *Slumber's chain*: Does this fit the mood of the poem so well as the other images?

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON
(1788-1824)

George Gordon, sixth Lord Byron, was the son of "Mad Jack Byron," a military rake, and of Catherine Gordon, a Scottish heiress. His father, having squandered the fortune acquired by marriage, died when the boy was but three years old; and his mother, of a capricious and passionate temperament ("a fool" a schoolmate called

her, and her son replied, "I know it"), alternately gave him caresses and blows and thus did her part to make him sensitive, proud, rebellious, and hot-tempered. When only ten years old, he inherited the titles and estates of his uncle at Newstead Abbey. At Harrow, where he received his schooling from 1801 to 1805, he neglected his studies, but read widely, formed many friendships, and took part in athletic sports despite his handicap of lameness—a handicap of which he remained in after years morbidly conscious. Proceeding to Trinity College, Cambridge, he indulged his "tumultuous passions" in an irregular college career, shooting, boxing, swimming, gambling, falling in love, writing verse. While at Cambridge he published a volume of poems entitled *Hours of Idleness*, and, angered by a contemptuous criticism of the volume in the *Edinburgh Review*, he retaliated two years later with his satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Not long before it was published, he took his seat in the House of Lords; and soon after it was published he left England for a tour, lasting two years, in the Mediterranean lands.

Returning from this "pilgrimage," Byron published, in 1812, two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The effect was electric: "I awoke one morning," he said, "and found myself famous." He was lionized, he was read by everybody, he was a center of public interest. Following up his success, he wrote a series of Oriental tales in verse that attained an even greater popularity. In 1815 he married Anne Milbanke; the next year, because of his irregularities, she left him, returning to her father's home; while he, ostracized by the society that he had fascinated, abandoned the land of his birth and spent the rest of his years on the Continent.

Travelling in a large coach patterned on Napoleon's, Byron passed through Belgium, where he visited the field of Waterloo; and thence he proceeded up the Rhine to Lake Geneva, where he spent much time with Shelley. While in Switzerland, he finished the third canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (page 99), wrote "The Prisoner of Chillon" (page 123), the "Epistle to Augusta" (page 121), the frag-

ment entitled "Darkness" (page 128), "Prometheus" (page 127), and part of the dramatic poem "Manfred" (page 130). In the autumn of the same year, 1816, he passed on to Italy,—the land of his exile till shortly before his death. Italy became the inspiration of the fourth canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (page 153); and here he wrote the extraordinary "Don Juan" (page 160). After several years of residence at Venice,— "the greenest island of my imagination,"—he removed to Ravenna in order to be close to the Countess Guiccioli, a young girl who had married a widower of sixty. Later he "gave up to her his house at La Mira," residing there with her.

While living in Italy, Byron was actively interested in the movement for her independence; and at length a similar cause, the cause of Greece struggling for freedom, resolved him to dedicate himself to its service. At the opening of the year 1824 he reached Mesolonghi, worked ably and tirelessly in preparation for a military expedition against the Turks, and there he died, of fever, to the great grief of the Greek people and of his ardent admirers everywhere.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC (1815)

Compare the melancholy of this and various subsequent poems with the melancholy expressed by Coleridge in "Dejection: An Ode," having regard to the nature of the "joy" viewed in retrospect and the cause of the melancholy mood. Compare Byron's experience, also, with Wordsworth's ("Tintern Abbey," "Intimations of Immortality," "Ode to Duty," etc.).

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

As a narrative recounting the travels of Childe Harold, this long poem has a superficial unity. Fundamentally, however, it is a series of descriptive and reflective stanzas held together by the dominant personality of the "hero," who is, plainly, Byron himself. His flamboyant

temperament oscillates restlessly between enthusiasm and satiety, rapture and melancholy; and, turning in upon itself, now honestly confronts itself and now indulges in theatrical poses. With some modification, we may say of him, as he said of Burns: "What an antithetical mind!—tenderness, roughness, delicacy, coarseness, sentiment, sensuality, soaring and groveling, dirt and deity, all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay." It is this personality, coloring the scenes described, permeating the memories of great historic events, and expressing itself directly in reflective passages and lyrical outbursts, that engages our deepest interest in this "Pilgrimage," and indeed in virtually all of Byron's poetry.

The first two cantos contain the impressions made upon Byron in his tour through Portugal, Spain, Albania, and Greece. Although they established his fame (see the biography, above), they are far inferior, in brilliant creative energy, in vitalizing imagination, to the two later cantos.

CANTO THIRD

The allusion of the motto—"In order that this employment will force you to think of something else; there is in truth no other remedy except this and time"—is clear from lines 32-36.

(99.) 1-5. *Is thy face like thy mother's*: When Lady Byron left him, their daughter was but a few weeks old, and Byron never saw her again.

(102.) 158. "*Pride of place* is a term of falconry, meaning the highest pitch of flight. See *Macbeth*: 'An eagle towering in her pride of place . . .'" (Byron's note.)

(103.) 179-180. *when the myrtle wreathes a sword* etc. Two noble Athenians, Harmodius and Aristogiton, having hidden their daggers in branches of myrtle at the Festival of Athena, assassinated Hipparchus, brother of the tyrant Hippias, but failed to slay Hippias himself. After the expulsion of Hippias several years later, the two young conspirators, who had lost their lives in consequence of their deed, were extolled as types of the patriot and martyr.

(104.) 226-234. *And wild and high* etc.:

"Cameron's Gathering" was the rallying song of the Scottish clan Cameron, played on the bagpipes. The chief of the clan was Donald Cameron of Lochiel, who had fought in "Albyn's hills" (Scotland) against "her Saxon foes" (the English) in 1745. Evan Cameron, grandfather of Donald, had fought against Cromwell. The valor of such ancestors was not forgotten on the field of Waterloo.

(106.) 353. *too far to show*: so far that it was unwise to show.

(107.) 420. *battles: battalions, armies.*

(108.) 450. *that it should Lethe be*: In the preceding lines, Byron, gazing upon the lovely Rhine, feels that it would be beautiful "like Heaven" if man could but leave it unsullied, as it had been created. Even now, he adds, it lacks nothing if he can but obliterate its conflicts, and his own, from his mind. But he cannot; he could not forget them unless it were not the Rhine but Lethe, the river of oblivion; cf. lines 458-459.

457. *Glassed with its dancing light*: The rays of the sun, reflected by the water as if by glass, conceal, rather than reveal, the blood of battles long ago.

(109.) 476. *one fond breast*: referring to his sister Augusta.

(111.) 601. *Morat*: scene of a Swiss victory in 1476.

604. *Burgundy*: Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.

607. *Unsepulchred they roamed*: "The chapel is destroyed, and the pyramid of bones diminished to a small number by the Burgundian legion in the service of France, who anxiously effaced this record of their ancestors' less successful invasions. . . ." (Byron's note.)

608. *Cannæ's carnage*: At Cannæ, in Italy, the Romans suffered a disastrous defeat by Hannibal in 216 B.C.

616. *some Draconic clause*: The code of laws said to have been drawn up by the Athenian Draco about 621 B.C. was stern and rigid.

625. *Aventicum*: "Aventicum, near Morat, was the Roman capital of Helvetia, where Aventches now stands" (Byron's note).

627. *Julia, the daughter, the devoted*: "Julia Alpinula, a young Aventian

priestess, died soon after a vain endeavor to save her father, condemned to death as a traitor by Aulus Cæcina. . . ." (Byron's note.)

(111.) 644. *Lake Leman*: Lake Geneva.

(112.) 656. *Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil*: For the image and idea, cf. lines 55-60 (page 100); also line 383 (page 107).

698-706. *And when at length etc.*:

Here the poet resumes and develops the thought of lines 683-688; and, in the next stanza, the thought of lines 680-683.

(113.) 725. *wild Rousseau*: Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), born at Geneva, was one of the chief forces in the transformation of the Europe of the eighteenth century into the Europe of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For the essential facts about Rousseau, consult a good encyclopedia; for a sympathetic study of his personality, see J. R. Lowell's essay in *Prose Works*, vol. II. The reader who desires to make a more extended acquaintance with him may be referred to John Morley's *Rousseau*, to Irving Babbitt's *Rousseau and Romanticism*, and to Rousseau's chief works, *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, *Émile ou l'Éducation*, *Le Contrat Social*, and the *Confessions* (most of these are to be had in translation).

743. *This breathed itself to life in Julie*: Rousseau's *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, a novel in the form of letters telling of the love of Julie and Saint-Preux, was the outcome of his "sensuous communion with nature in her summer mood in the woods of Montmorency, the long hours and days of solitary expansion, the despairing passion for the too sage Julie of actual experience" (John Morley).

747. *hers who but with friendship*: The passage "refers to the account in his *Confessions* of his passion for the Comtesse d'Houdetot (the mistress of St. Lambert), and his long walk every morning, for the sake of the single kiss which was the common salutation of French acquaintance. . . ." (Byron's note.)

(114.) 755. *the kind*: mankind.

(115.) 848. *Cytherea's zone*: Venus's girdle. — In this stanza, the mystic harmony with nature prepared for in stanzas LXXI-LXXV reaches its consummation. The poet's mood, through association with

the beauty that he has just been describing, has attained an elevated quiet. The reminiscent, speculative tone of the earlier stanzas has disappeared. — Compare the mystic climaxes in "Tintern Abbey," at about lines 45 and 95 (pages 7 and 8). What is the main difference between Wordsworth and Byron in respect to this harmony with nature?

(116.) 879-886. *Heights which appear etc.*: Cf. "Christabel," line 422 and context (page 69).

900. *the knoll*: archaic form of "knell."

(117.) 923. *sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love*: a village on Lake Geneva used by Rousseau in the setting of his *New Héloïse*. One could not help being forcibly struck, says Byron in a note, "with its peculiar adaptation to the persons and events with which it has been peopled." Love, he adds, "the great principle of the universe, . . . is there more condensed;" so that, "though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality, and mingle in the beauty of the whole."

(118.) 977. *Lausanne! and Ferney!*: abodes, respectively, of Gibbon and Voltaire. Note that Byron characterizes the two eighteenth-century giants in the reverse order, "the one" in stanza CVI referring to Voltaire, "the other" in the following stanza to Gibbon.

982. *Titan-like*: They were impious Titans, inviting—because of their skeptical arrogance—thunderbolts from Zeus. According to myth, the Titans, warring against Zeus, piled hill upon hill in their effort to ascend the sky.

(120.) 1057. *filed*: defiled. Cf. "For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind" (Macbeth).

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

See the preceding poem, stanzas LIV-LV (page 109). But the dominant tone of the present piece differs from that of "Childe Harold"—how?

(121.) 38-48. *Something—I know not what etc.*: Cf. the preceding poem, stanza XXXIV (page 105).

(122.) 64. *our own of old*: the lake at Newstead Abbey.

SONNET ON CHILLON

(123.) 13. *Bonnivard*: François Bonnivard, a sixteenth-century Swiss patriot and ardent republican, who took part in the defence of Geneva against the Duke of Savoy and was imprisoned in the Castle of Chillon for six years, — that is, until the castle was captured by his friends. The castle is situated, amid magnificent scenery, at the end of Lake Geneva farthest from the city of Geneva. "It is by this castle," says Byron, "that Rousseau has fixed the catastrophe of his *Héloïse*."

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

When Byron wrote this poem in two days, not far from the scenes described in it, he was, as he says, "not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard" to make use of it. Perhaps the poem owes something of its poetic truth and power to the fact that, while inspired by the memory of Bonnivard, it is free from the trammels of history.

(124.) 52. *But*: except. — *that pale and livid light*: Cf. lines 30-35.

(126.) 263-264. *glimmer of the sun* etc.: Cf. lines 30-35. The sunbeam moved slowly on as the sun made its progress in the heavens.

(127.) 327. *had*: would have.

PROMETHEUS

In Greek mythology, the Titans were a race of primeval gods ultimately overthrown by the Olympian gods. Although himself a Titan, "Prometheus, it was said, sided with the Olympians in their struggle against the Titans; but, grieved at their neglect of mankind, he stole fire from heaven and bestowed upon man it and the arts which control of it makes possible. Zeus, angered at this, had him bound to Mount Caucasus. But Prometheus, who was gifted with prophetic foresight, knew the source from which Zeus was to be eventually overthrown, and the god, to win this knowledge, offered to release him. The Titan refused, rather than perpetuate

an unjust reign. Zeus then caused a vulture daily to consume his liver, which grew again at night, dooming him to this fate until some immortal should consent to die in Prometheus's stead. This Chiron did, and Hercules slew the vulture and released the Titan." (Webster's New International Dictionary.)

This myth, familiar to the Greeks in slightly varying versions, attained its supreme Classical expression in the "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus together with two lost plays, "Prometheus the Fire-Giver" and "Prometheus Unbound," the three constituting a unified trilogy. In the many centuries that followed, the story was virtually ignored by poets and dramatists, until, in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth century, the modern spirit was profoundly drawn to the Titan myth and it was reinterpreted by prominent writers in Germany, Italy, England, France, and America. Through this ancient story, modern writers expressed their hatred of tyranny, their spirit of revolt, their passion for heroic strength and independence, their sympathy with suffering. "The question the race asks, in this Myth," says G. E. Woodberry, "is 'What is most divine in me' 'What is the god in me?' — and Shelley answers, it is all-enduring and all-forgiving love toward all; and Herder answers that it is reason, Keats that it is beauty, Goethe that it is liberty, and Hugo that it is immense triumphant toil." What is the answer of Byron?

DARKNESS

(129.) 50. *clung them*: dried them up.

MANFRED

Byron's aim, in this dramatic poem, is similar to that of Marlowe in his "Dr. Faustus" (which Byron said he had not read) and of Goethe in his "Faust." "His 'Faust' I never read," said Byron, "for I don't know German; but Matthew Monk Lewis, in 1816, at Coligny, translated most of it to me *viva voce*, and I was naturally much struck with it; but it was the Staub-

bach and the Jungfrau, and something else, much more than 'Faustus,' that made me write 'Manfred.' Whatever its literary echoes, "Manfred" is essentially the expression of Byron's moods during his wanderings in the Swiss Alps. The moods of the two preceding poems, and of much of "Childe Harold," Canto Third, may be traced in this work.

ACT FIRST

(132.) 136. *Forgetfulness*: Cf. "Childe Harold," Canto Third, line 35, and the motto (page 99).

(133.) 202-203. *Though thy slumber etc.*: Cf. lines 3-7.

ACT SECOND

(138.) 145-173. *My spirit walked not with the souls of men etc.*: Cf. "Childe Harold," lines 100-135 (pages 101-102).

(139.) 186-187. *He who from out etc.*: Jamblicus, a mystical philosopher of the fourth century, who, bathing at the hot baths of Gadara, in Syria, evoked the gods Eros and Anteros from the springs.

(141.) 275. *The buried prophet*: Samuel; see *1 Samuel*, xxviii, 9 ff.

276. *The Spartan monarch*: Pausanias, who, having killed the maiden Cleonice by mischance, at length invoked her "unsleeping spirit" and learned that he would ere long be freed of his troubles. He was freed of them by death.

ACT THIRD

(147.) 88. *Rome's sixth emperor*: Nero.

101. *those who do despair above*: those who despair of heaven. "Above" is a noun.

116-123. *I could not tame my nature down etc.*: Cf. "Childe Harold," stanza CXIII (page 119); also stanza XL (page 106).

(148.) 176-179. *the giant sons etc.*: See *Genesis*, vi, 1-4. — This subject appealed strongly to Byron, and a few years later he worked it up superbly in his dramatic poem "Heaven and Earth."

MY BOAT IS ON THE SHORE

(153.) 3. *Tom Moore*: See the note on Thomas Moore (page 674, above).

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO
FOURTH

VENICE AND SUNSET

With stanzas 1-III, compare Wordsworth's sonnet, written fifteen years earlier, "On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic" (page 33); and see the notes on that poem (page 660, above).

1. *the Bridge of Sighs*: This famous bridge over the canal joins the Palace of the Doges and the old state dungeons.

8. *the winged Lion's marble piles*: Near the palace stands the lion of St. Mark, emblem of the old Venetian republic.

10. *Cybele*: the Greek Rhea, mother of Zeus, sometimes regarded as the goddess of town life and represented as wearing a crown of towers.

(154.) 20. *the songless gondolier*: Formerly, the gondoliers were wont to sing stanzas from the "Jerusalem Delivered" of Tasso, the great Italian poet of the sixteenth century.

33. *Pierre*: a character in the "Venice Preserved" of Otway. On Otway, see the note on page 670.

37-45. *The beings of the mind etc.*: With this stanza, compare "Childe Harold," Canto Third, stanza VI (page 100).

ROME AND FREEDOM

(155.) 703. *Niobe*: Boasting of her many children, Niobe, queen of Thebes, was punished for her presumption by the loss of all of them. "In her voiceless woe" she was changed to stone.

(156.) 734. *Tully's voice*: the voice of Marcus Tullius Cicero, often called Tully.

DESIRE AND DISILLUSION

(157.) 1128. *upas*: a tall, poisonous tree of Java, formerly said to be so noxious as to destroy all living creatures that drew near it.

(158.) 1143. *couch the blind*: remove a cataract obstructing the vision. The operation known as couching is now obsolete.

THE OCEAN

(159.) 1620. *there let him lay*: This use of "lay" for "lie," familiar to students of Shakespeare, was regarded as reputable as late as the eighteenth century. Byron's revival of the usage was purposeless.

DON JUAN

This poem, the last great work of Byron, exceeding 15,000 lines in length but left unfinished at his departure for Greece, is commonly regarded as his masterpiece. Into it he has poured himself—all the conflicting elements of his large personality: wit, satire, cynicism, sentiment, pathos dominate by turns, or blend into an incomparably piquant mixture. Upon completing the first canto of "Don Juan" Byron said that it "is meant to be a little quietly facetious upon everything. But I doubt whether it is not—at least, as far as it has yet gone—too free for these very modest days." After the publication of the first two cantos, he wrote in a letter: "You ask me for the plan of Donny Johnny: I *have* no plan—I *had* no plan; but I *had* or have materials. . . . Do you suppose that I have any intention but to giggle and make giggle?—a playful satire, with as little poetry as could be helped, was what I meant." When the fifth canto was done, he said that he had only begun the work. "I meant to take him the tour of Europe, with a proper mixture of siege, battle, and adventure, and to make him finish as Anacharsis Cloots in the French Revolution. . . . I meant to have him a Cavalier Servente in Italy, and a cause for a divorce in England, and a Sentimental 'Werther-faced man' in Germany, so as to show the different ridicules of the society in each of those countries, and to have displayed him gradually *gâté* and *blasé* as he grew older, as is natural. But I had not quite fixed whether to make him end in Hell, or in an unhappy marriage, not knowing which would be the severest.

The Spanish tradition says Hell: but it is probably only an allegory of the other state."—The hero's name Byron derived from a familiar Spanish story relating to the profligate Don Juan de Tenorio.

JUAN AND HAIDÉE

(162.) 1542. *the Stygian river*: the river Styx, over which the shades passed into Hades.—Byron brings in the Greek as well as the medieval notion of punishment after death, for the sake of Haidée. But is her devout knowledge in this stanza consistent with her "pure ignorance" in stanza *cxc*?

(164.) 1624. *Castlereagh*: an unpopular Tory statesman who was leader of the House of Commons during part of Byron's lifetime.

1633-1638. *Oh, Love! of whom* etc.: Love troubles all mankind, in different ways, as the following attest: Cæsar, fascinated by Cleopatra; Antony, who surrendered himself to her charms and destroyed his career; Titus, master of the passion, who, unpopular because of his attachment to Berenice, sent her away from Rome after becoming emperor; the Roman poets, Horace, Catullus, well versed in Love's lore, and Ovid, author of "The Art of Love"; and Sappho, the great Greek lyric poetess, who seems to have been the centre of an aristocratic literary society of women at Mytilene, and who, according to the story, finding her love of Phaon unrequited, leaped from the Leucadian rock, a promontory of the island of Leucadia, into the Ionian Sea.

1643. *Belisarius*: a general of the Byzantine Empire in the sixth century, who conquered the Persians and the Vandals of Africa, but was unable to cope with his wife Antonina, a woman of vicious character.

1649-1650. *Epicurus and Aristippus, a material crew!*: ancient Greek philosophers who held that the highest good in life is pleasure. Although some of the later adherents of this doctrine were certainly a material and sensual crew, Aristippus and Epicurus, who established the doctrine, believed that the attainment of a high quality of pleasure demanded self-

control and moderation. Byron, like many others, has misrepresented their teaching. (164.) 1656. *the royal sage, Sardanapalus*: semi-legendary king of Assyria. — In Byron's fascinating drama, of which this genial hedonist is the hero, written two years after the present Canto, romance and mockery are also mingled.

(165.) 1691. *Platonic, universal*: In the philosophy of Plato, true reality resides, not in the world of the senses and of the individual things perceived by the senses, but in the world of "the Idea," the ideal, the universal. "He who has learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, when he comes toward the end will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty, not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning, not fair in one point of view and foul in another, or in the likeness of a face, or hands, or any other part of the bodily frame, or in any form of speech or knowledge, nor existing in any other being; but Beauty only, absolute, separate, simple, everlasting, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever growing and perishing beauties of all other things" (Plato's *Symposium*). In the preceding stanza, Byron means that when we adore a beautiful person or object (the "real," or, better, the actual), we are, rather, adoring "ideal beauty" as imparted to that person or object. This Platonic conception of beauty easily lends itself to fallacies and distortions; the ambiguities of the familiar phrase "Platonic love" are a sufficient example. Byron, anything but a Platonist, uses the conception playfully.

THE ISLES OF GREECE

(166.) 676. "*Ça ira*": "It will succeed," a song of the French Revolution.

(167.) 686. *De Staël*: In her book on Germany, Madame De Staël had asserted that Goethe summed up German literature. "The Pegasus he'd prance on" would therefore be Goethean.

687. "*trecentisti*": authors of the fourteenth century in Italy, of whom the chief were Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

692. *Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!* According to myth, the island of

Delos rose from the waves of the Ægean Sea and became the birthplace of Phoebus Apollo, god of poetry and music.

695. *The Scian and the Teian muse*: Homer and Anacreon, born, or said to have been born, respectively, at Scio and Teos.

700. "*Islands of the Blest*": the happy abodes vaguely located in the "Western Ocean" where the favorites of the gods were said to dwell after death.

701. *Marathon*: the plain between mountains and sea, northeast of Athens, where the army of Miltiades heroically defeated the Persian hordes.

707. *A king*: Xerxes, King of Persia, whose fleet was defeated by the Greeks between Attica and the island of Salamis.

730. *Thermopylæ*: at the pass of Thermopylæ three hundred Spartans made their immortal stand against the army of Xerxes.

738. *Samian wine*: Anacreon, the great lyric poet who sang the praises of love and wine, lived at the court of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, an island in the Ægean.

743-744. *the Pyrrhic dance* — — — *the Pyrrhic phalanx*: The former is an ancient war dance, the latter a military formation used by the Greek general Pyrrhus.

747. *the letters Cadmus gave*: Cadmus, a legendary Greek hero, was credited with having introduced into Greece from Phœnicia or Egypt an alphabet of sixteen letters.

751. *Anacreon's song*: See the note to line 738, above.

(168.) 762. *Suli's rock, and Parga's shore*: places in Albania, the home of a rugged people who took part in the struggle against Turkey which led to Byron's death. Byron holds them to be heroic, "Heracleidan," as if they were of the race of Heracles (Hercules), the mythical national hero of the ancient Greeks.

813. *what whist owes to Hoyle*: Edmund Hoyle, whose treatise on whist (1742) made him "famous."

821. *his life falling into Johnson's way*: Dr. Johnson's life of Milton does justice neither to himself nor to "this great high priest" of the Muses.

(169.) 833-840. *All are not moralists* etc.: Heroes such as those named in the preceding stanza, says Byron with jocular irony, were not moralistic in their youth like Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, who as young men advocated democracy. See the note on Wordsworth's "Protest Against the Ballot" (page 666, above), and on Southey's "Battle of Blenheim" (page 671, above).—After meeting Wordsworth at a dinner, Byron remarked: "To tell the truth, I had but one feeling from the beginning of the visit to the end, and that was reverence."

842. *Botany Bay*: an Australian settlement for criminals.

852. *Joanna Southcote's Shiloh*: A certain Joanna Southcote announced prophetically that on a specified day in the year 1814 she would give birth to a second Shiloh (Messiah). The miracle was beyond her powers; she presently died of dropsy.

865. "*longueurs*": things that are dull and long-winded.

871. *epopee*: epic poem.

876. "*Waggoners*": Wordsworth's poem "The Waggoner," published in 1819, is anything but exciting. Its scene is the Lake country that the poet loved in its every feature.

(170.) 877. *He wishes for "a boat"*: "Peter Bell," published in 1819, begins:

"There's something in a flying horse,
There's something in a huge balloon;
But through the clouds I'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
Shaped like the crescent-moon."

883. *Charles's Wain*: the heavenly constellation also known as the Great Bear or Dipper.

THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

The author explains his frame of mind also in a well known passage in the first Canto of the poem, stanzas ccxii ff.

5. *Lucifer*: Satan. He appears in Byron's drama "Cain," which, published a few months after this Canto, delighted Goethe with its forcefulness, but shocked many readers with its unorthodoxy, like certain parts of "Don Juan;" see lines 33-34 (page 171).

21-22. "*falls into the yellow Leaf*:" "Macbeth," V, 3, 23: "my way of life is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf," i.e., the autumn of my life is at hand.

(171.) 29, 32. *Lethe*: the river of forgetfulness.—On this theme in Byron, see note to "Manfred," Act First, line 136 (page 679, above).

43. *Pulci*: See Byron's translation of the amusing first canto of "The Morgante Maggiore" by Pulci (Italian poet, 1432-1484). The stanza form is the same as in "Don Juan."

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

5. *My days are in the yellow leaf*: See, above, note to page 170, lines 21-22. Cf. Shakespeare's Sonnets, number lxxiii.

23. *The Spartan, borne upon his shield*: The Spartans, slain or wounded, were borne from the field upon their shields. Byron's imagination never fails to respond to the martial virtues.

MANGAN: THE NAMELESS ONE

In his note on the previous poem, Paul Elmer More says: "The pathos and sincerity of these verses are echoed in Mangan's 'The Nameless One,' though the spirit of the two poems is not the same" (Cambridge edition of Byron). James Clarence Mangan (1803-1849) was a gifted Irish poet, of pure but too vehement spirit,—to some extent influenced by Byron's work. His Oriental poem "The Karamanian Exile" suggested the metre of J. R. Randall's "Maryland, My Maryland." His "Dark Rosaleen" is one of the best lyrics written for the Irish national cause.

(172.) 33. *dreeing*: enduring. He left school while very young and labored at uncongenial work to support his parents.

38. *Maginn*: William Maginn (1793-1842), Irish author; given to intemperance.—Mangan himself, in the way he here describes, became addicted to rum and opium. His sufferings were aggra-

vated, as the next stanzas indicate, by conscience, poverty, and illness.

PEACOCK: THERE IS A FEVER

"I think it necessary to make a stand against the encroachments of the black bile," wrote the robust Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866) to his friend Shelley, while engaged on "Nightmare Abbey," a delightful satiric novel burlesquing the romantic melancholy of the day. In the climactic chapter, "Mr. Cypress," representing Byron, sings this song to a drawing-room audience that includes the caricatured figures of Coleridge and Shelley. Peacock advocated "the cheerful and solid wisdom of antiquity." In style, his lyrics have the clear-cut quality of Byron's best stanzas.

(173.) 1. *There is a fever of the spirit:*
Cf. "Childe Harold," Canto Third, stanza xlii (page 106).

2. *Cain's unresting doom:* This prophetic allusion preceded by three years Byron's drama "Cain," into the hero of which he put much of his own spirit.

4. *the lamp in Tullia's tomb:* Doubtless Peacock had in mind the desolate grief of Cicero for his daughter Tullia, though no record exists of the tomb he planned for her.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

At Field Place, an eighteenth-century mansion in Sussex, Shelley was born about five months before the execution of Louis XVI by the French revolutionists. At the age of ten he left the sheltered freedom of his childhood and the companionship of a troop of younger sisters, exchanging them for the confinement of a school at Brentford and the enmity of high-spirited and athletic English school-boys. Gentle and shy, sensitive and excitable, he held aloof from his fellows so far as possible, seeking the consolation of tales of mystery and magic and of wonder-working natural science. At Eton, the great school to which he proceeded in 1804, his life was

much the same. "I have seen him," wrote a schoolmate, "surrounded, hooted, baited like a maddened bull, and at this distance of time I seem to hear ringing in my ears the cry which Shelley was wont to utter in his paroxysm of revengeful anger." Though unhappy, he had some friends, enjoyed rambles in the lovely countryside, read many books (including Godwin's *Political Justice*), conducted perilous experiments in physics and chemistry, and wrote romantic tales in prose and verse.

Entering University College, Oxford, in 1810, he was free once more — free to live very much as he chose, to read what he pleased, to conduct his experiments without fear of interruption, to wander in the country with his new friend Hogg; but his college life was darkened by disappointment in love and by the culminating disaster of expulsion. He wrote and circulated a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*, basing his argument on the eighteenth-century premiss that the senses are the sole source of knowledge.

Exiled from the University and from the favor of his well-meaning but unsympathetic and rather pompous father, Shelley proceeded, the following year, at the age of nineteen, to elope with a school-girl of sixteen, Harriet Westbrook, daughter of a retired innkeeper — not for love of her, but out of a desire to shelter her from persecution. His income shut off by his father, young Shelley wandered with his wife for several years from one place to another in Britain and Ireland, seeking to promote the cause of tolerance and freedom, reading irregularly, and writing his Godwinian poem "Queen Mab." From Godwin he derived nearly all of the ideas that prevail in this poem and, indeed, in his work as a whole; such ideas as the perfectibility of man, non-resistance, anarchism, the sovereignty of reason, universal benevolence, and the dependence of immorality upon human institutions. In 1811 he began a correspondence with his master Godwin, in 1812 met him; and two years later, having separated from Harriet and having fallen in love with Godwin's daughter Mary, he eloped with her. In two more years, Harriet drowned herself and he formally married Mary Godwin. To

her he dedicated his ambitious revolutionary poem "The Revolt of Islam" (page 176).

In 1818 he left England never to return. It was during his residence in Italy, in the four years that remained to him, that Shelley produced most of his greatest poetry: "Prometheus Unbound" (page 182), "The Cenci," "Adonais" (page 218), and a succession of lyrics that includes "Stanzas Written in Dejection" (page 179), "Ode to the West Wind" (page 181), "The Cloud" (page 199), and "To a Skylark" (page 201). At the age of thirty he met an untimely end by drowning in the Bay of Lerici, — a volume of Sophocles in one pocket and in another a volume of Keats. He lies buried in Rome.

In one of his last poems, "A Dirge" (page 231), Shelley calls upon the rough wind and the bare woods, the deep caves and dreary ocean, to "Wail, for the world's wrong!" This is the negative note of his poetry from beginning to end. To Coleridge and Wordsworth, maturing in the full flush of the Revolution, the world was wrong and might soon be reshaped nearer to the heart's desire; eagerly they heralded the new age until events belied their hopes. To Shelley, maturing long after these events, the world seemed even more wrong, and the chance to right it more remote. Yet he never ceased to believe that ultimately humanity — the suffering, loving hero Prometheus — would be unbound and that the millenium would come. What might be — yes, what *would* be — this was the positive side of all his poetry: what would be when the Spirit of Beauty permeated the whole of man's life. While still a boy,

"I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine — have I not kept the
vow?"

He kept it all his days, with fervid aspiration; and by the incantation of his verse he has served as a source of inspiration to countless idealistic readers of his poems ever since. The "Spring" toward which he looks in the "Ode to the West Wind" (page 181) may never come through such means as this disciple of Godwin provided

— his ideas may seem inadequate, or distorted, even false — but the flaming spirit of the poet passes into us as we read, and makes the world fluent for us. He sought to change chaos into harmony. If his harmony is premature, wanting essential elements of experience, he gives us, nevertheless, a poetic vision of the world expressed with a pure rapture perhaps unequalled in literature.

TO WORDSWORTH

(173.) 1-4. "*Poet of Nature --- leaving thee to mourn:*" He is thinking of the "Ode on Immortality," particularly. But he attributes a Shelleyan cast of feeling to Wordsworth.

From ALASTOR

Observe, in several phrases, the echoes of Wordsworth's treatment of nature.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

By intellectual beauty Shelley means spiritual beauty, — the "Spirit of Beauty" (line 13) that fitfully visits the human mind, in contrast with the beauty of material things. He believes that if this divine spirit of beauty dominated humanity, it would transform life — "free This world from its dark slavery" (line 71) and unite all men by love (line 84). Shelley's conception of an abstract or spiritual beauty, almost synonymous with divinity, is akin to Plato's (consult the note, page 681, to line 1691 of "Don Juan," beginning *Platonic, universal*); the humanitarianism with which he modifies it, however, is modern and un-Greek.

(175.) 49-52. *While yet a boy --- the departed dead:* Cf. the preceding poem, lines 23-29 ("I have made my bed," etc.).

(176.) 78-80. *like the truth Of nature* etc.: For a fuller expression of his attitude toward nature, see the preceding poem. Compare the whole conception of intellectual beauty in the present poem with that of nature in the preceding.

TO MARY — —

(176.) 21-36. *I do remember — — meek and bold*: a reminiscence of another experience of boyhood. The victim of tyranny at school, Shelley dedicates himself to freedom and tolerance, as in the preceding poem, line 61, he dedicated himself to Beauty. — Exactly what is the ideal of conduct imaginatively conceived by Shelley?

(177.) 46-50. *Alas that love — — I moved alone*: The allusion is to his relation with Harriet, with whom he was for a time, as he said to Hogg, "the happiest of the happy," and to whom he had dedicated "Queen Mab" as a pledge of his love (see page 173).

(178.) 86-87. *Anarch Custom's reign — — Truth's own sway*: See the note, page 663, to line 127 of Wordsworth's ode on Immortality. See also line 115, below ("And Faith and Custom" etc.).

88. *Holier than was Amphion's*: According to Greek myth, Amphion received a lyre from Hermes, upon which he played so magically that stones moved in response.

99. *vestal fire*: the fire upon the altar of Vesta, the Roman goddess of the hearth, kept perpetually burning by the Vestals, who were chaste as the goddess herself.

102. *one*: Mary Wollstonecraft, author of the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792, Godwin's first wife and the mother of Mary Godwin. Godwin himself is alluded to in the last line of this stanza.

OZYMANDIAS

(179.) 8. *The hand — — and the heart*: the hand of the sculptor that mimicked the passions, and the heart of Ozymandias that fed them. This is the compound object of the verb "survive" (line 7).

STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION

(180.) 37-45. *Some might lament etc.*: The thought of this concluding stanza,

obsured by the syntax, seems to be as follows: Some might lament my death — as I, though out of harmony with the beauty of this day, may lament its passing. Some *might* lament — but lovelessly, and without the regretful joy which this stainless day will leave in memory.

LIFT NOT THE PAINTED VEIL

The "painted veil" is the merely conventional life. Its "shapes" and "colors" are a faint imitation of the great truths and ideals we should like to believe in (line 3). But an idealist (line 7), looking beyond that veil for something to satisfy his capacity for love, could find nothing but alternate fear and hope. Nor in the actual world (line 10), could he find any truth (line 14). Thus, his "lost heart" (line 8) had no stay either in the ideal or in the actual.

14. *the Preacher*: "All is vanity, saith the Preacher" (*Eccles.* 1, 2).

ENGLAND IN 1819

See note to Wordsworth's "Protest Against the Ballot" (page 666, above). For the condition of England at this time see the opening lines of Byron's rollicking satire, "The Vision of Judgment," concerning the death of George the Third.

1. *king*: George the Third.

12. *Time's worst statute*: the laws excluding Catholics from office. A motion to consider the repeal of these laws was defeated in Parliament by a narrow margin.

13. *a glorious Phantom*: Liberty.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

The poem expresses Shelley's love of swift, impulsive motion in nature, merged with his yearning for a radical regeneration in human society — for a swift, strong motion of the spirit, like that of nature's forces, bringing in its train a new era of liberty and justice, peace and brotherhood. This new life is the "Spring" that he prophesies at the very end of the poem.

In basic structure, this ode is simple. In the first three stanzas Shelley addresses the autumn wind as a power driving the leaves (stanza 1), the clouds (II), the waves (III). Then, with a summarizing transition, he turns to his own plight—his weakness, his sense of defeat and subjection, contrasting with the tameless, swift, proud wind (IV). Rising to a passionate climax (V) he aspires to an identification with the fierce Spirit of this force of nature, bidding it drive his ineffectual thoughts over the universe to be a prophecy of the rebirth of humanity.

(181.) 9. *Thine azure sister of the Spring*: the spring wind bringing blue skies.

18. *Angels*: in Greek, "messengers," and so used here.

21. *Maenad*: a priestess of Bacchus.

32. *Baiae's bay*: near Naples; a famous resort of the ancient Romans.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

For an account of the Greek myth that forms the ultimate basis for this lyrical drama, see the note to Byron's "Prometheus," page 678, above. Return also to Byron's poem (page 127) and compare his conception of the myth with Shelley's.

In his preface to the drama, Shelley remarks that he was averse from a conclusion "so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. . . . Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends." To his sufferings and endurance Prometheus is conceived as adding love, the highest of moral qualities, by virtue of which he is released by Hercules and merged with Asia, the generative principle in nature. Instead of keeping distinct the characters of Prometheus

and Asia, and representing their union as a marriage of divergent ideals, Shelley prefers to render them as fundamentally the same, as two embodiments of an exalted love, the one in man, the other in nature. Love assumes its place as the supreme power in man and nature, and tyrannical oppression, symbolized by Jupiter in the divine order and by human institutions in society, falls away like a "loathesome mask." Ardently, rhapsodically, Shelley pictures that day of liberty and of love, of total regeneration, for which he had yearned in the "Ode to the West Wind" (page 181) and other poems.

ACT FIRST

(182.) 10. *to thy scorn*: to my scorn of thee.

18. *Almighty, had I deigned*, etc.: almighty thou wouldst have been, if I had deigned, etc. Prometheus, refusing to reveal to Jupiter the secret of his doom, is not an accomplice in his tyranny.

(183.) 57. *hate no more*: Cf. "Lines to a Critic" (page 179).

72. *let them — — — now*: let not my words lose their power (line 69), though hate is gone.

(185.) 152. *I am the Earth*: Here the Earth begins to speak in her immortal voice, so that Prometheus, the immortal, can understand. Previously she has spoken in her mortal voice. The idea is that the Earth (or Nature) is related both to immortal and to mortal things.—Compare the poet's own relation to Nature in "Alastor" (page 174) with that of Prometheus to Earth, given in ensuing speeches.

(186.) 215. *revenge of the Supreme*: i.e., of Jupiter.

218-221. *Mother, let not aught — — — appear*: To prevent curses, a form of evil, from again passing the lips of Prometheus, Shelley transfers them to the phantom of evil Jupiter. Prometheus had said, "I hate no more" (line 57, above), and he must not now be represented as guilty of hate; yet Shelley wished to avail himself of the force of the repeated curse. Hence this expedient, rather artificially introduced (see lines 254-261, below).

(189.) 398. *the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword*: the sword suspended by a single hair over the head of Damocles as he sat at table.

(191.) 524. *The space within my plumes*: Cf. line 439 (page 189), above.

546. *One came forth*: Jesus.

(192.) 567. *a disenchanted nation*: the France of the Revolution.

(193.) 628. *all best things — — — to ill*: Christianity and the French Revolution are examples.

637-638. *Thy works — — — thou subtle tyrant*: After showing, above, the natural causes of human ills (e.g., lines 542-545), the poet now returns to Jupiter as the ultimate cause of all.

(194.) 675-682. *And we breathe*, etc.: This sentence develops the theme of line 659; the next sentence, the theme of lines 660-663.

741. *aërial kisses*: See "Alastor," line 35 and context (page 174).

(195.) 790-800. *In the atmosphere* etc.: For the dual relationship of these spirits, — to nature and to human nature, — see note to lines 675-682, above. Their prophecy of social regeneration is here associated with the revival of nature in spring; cf. the "Ode to the West Wind" (page 181).

809. *Asia*: For her nature, see the introductory note on this poem, above; and read Act Second (here omitted) which revolves about her. In Act Third, after the fall of Jupiter, she is reunited with the "unbound" Prometheus. Before their cave in a forest, they listen while an account of the great change that has come over mankind is given by the "Spirit of the Hour." From his speech is taken the next selection in the text, "*The Day of Liberty*."

ACT THIRD: THE DAY OF LIBERTY

(196.) 163. *nepenthe*: a drug used by the ancients to produce forgetfulness of pain and sorrow.

(197.) 176-177. *even so — — — last captivity*: The "thrones, altars," etc. (lines 164-167) emblemize the final state of superstitious faith, as the "obelisks," etc. (lines 168-175) emblemized its primitive state.

190-193. *The painted veil* etc.: Cf. "Lift Not the Painted Veil" (page 180, and the note, page 685). But observe that the result of pushing aside the veil is different in the present case — why?

197. *but man*: This is parallel to "but man" in line 194, above.

199. *Which were — — — suffered them*: Pain and guilt existed because man's will caused or permitted them. See note to Act First, lines 637-638, above.

ACT FOURTH: THE DAY OF LOVE

As a drama, "Prometheus Unbound" properly ends with Act Third. The fourth act is a finely sustained lyric passage, or series of related lyrics, culminating in the measured rapture of the final words of Demogorgon, who represents necessity or fate. In this act, which came to Shelley as an after-thought, the main purpose is to set forth, with a glowing impressiveness, a millennial vision of love and joy. Shelley's vision can fruitfully be compared with Wordsworth's in the selection from "The Recluse" (page 17 ff.), which was published in the preface to "The Excursion" some five years before the present poem was composed.

(198.) 412-423. *All things confess* etc.: The first of these two stanzas deals with the fine arts—sculpture, architecture, painting, poetry; the second with natural science. Through the arts and sciences the human spirit controls all things, giving them form and meaning.

415. *orphic song*: enchanting song, like that of Orpheus, who could charm wild animals and trees and rocks.

416. *daedal harmony*: a harmony intricately and cunningly contrived.

(199.) 555. *the Earth-born's spell*: the spell of Prometheus.

THE CLOUD

28. *The Spirit he loves*: Shelley may have in mind water-vapor, or perhaps the general love of nature's spirits for one another; cf. "Love's Philosophy" (page 180).

(200.) 29-30. *And I — — — dissolving in*

rains: The *spirit* of the cloud — the invisible water-vapor — remains, while the *form* of the cloud, and with it the lighting, dissolves. (The antecedent of "I" is apparently the "Spirit" in the preceding line.) The idea that clouds "die in rain" occurs also in "The Triumph of Life," lines 155-157.

(200.) 58. *these*: that is, the stars (line 52).

67-70. *The triumphal arch* — — — *bow*: Cf. "Prometheus Unbound," Act First, line 708 ff. (page 194).

73-76. *I am the daughter* etc.: See note to line 29, above.

81. *cenotaph*: a tomb in honor of a person whose remains are elsewhere. The cloud's cenotaph is "the blue dome of air" in the preceding line.

ARETHUSA

The Fountain of Arethusa is close to the shore of the island Ortygia, which was part of the ancient Greek city of Syracuse in Sicily. Alpheus is the leading river of Peloponnesus in Greece, in certain parts of its course flowing underground. The fountain and the river were connected, mythically, as follows: As the nymph Arethusa was bathing one day in the waters of the Alpheus, she heard the voice of the river-god Alpheus, who, enamored of her, bade her not to flee. She ran, however, and he pursued, 'till at length Diana changed her into a fountain. Then Alpheus, sundering the rocks of the Erymanthus mountains, followed the fleet nymph with his waters to the very sea. "Oh save me!" she cried, and Diana (or Ocean, in Shelley's poem) opened a secret passage under sea and earth, through which she passed, Alpheus ever pursuing, from the Greek coast all the way to Sicily, until at length their married waters came to the surface in Syracuse, where the Fountain of Arethusa may be seen to this day. Shelley, in the last stanza of his poem, follows in imagination the daily flow of waters from Enna in central Sicily, down the valleys, through woods and through meadows gay with asphodel flowers (daffodils), until at night they rest in the

spring beneath the level of the Ortygian shore.

This poem and the preceding are the most sheerly joyous of the selections from Shelley. What is the source of the spirit of joy that pervades them?

TO A SKYLARK

(202.) 51. *embowered*: The rose is hidden in the foliage of the bush it grows on, but its petals are borne out by the winds (line 53). Here, as in the preceding images, the poet illustrates the idea of a concealed source of influence (lines 18-20).

THE QUESTION

(203.) 10. *Arcturi*: plural of Arcturus, the well-known star.

15. *mother's*: Mother Earth's. The flower referred to may be the tulip.

18. *May*: hawthorne.

25. *trembling edge*: See line 5.

(204.) 37. *the Hours*: in Greek mythology, the goddesses of the order of nature and of the seasons.

From ODE TO NAPLES

This stanza is notable for its embodiment of a theme frequent in Shelley's poetry: quiet beauty together with a sense of desolation.

(205.) 1. *the city disinterred*: Pompeii.

4-9. *The Mountain's slumberous voice* etc.: For the inarticulate voice of Earth, see "Prometheus Unbound," Act First, lines 131-136 (page 184).

TO THE MOON

The moon becomes here an image for that restlessness of heart which runs throughout Shelley's poetry, appearing sometimes in joy and aspiration, sometimes in sadness and disillusion. See the next poem.

(206.) 6. *That finds no object* etc.: With this line compare "Lift Not the Painted Veil," line 10 and context (page 180).

POLITICAL GREATNESS

(207.) 8. *that heaven: the glass of art*
(line 6).

MUTABILITY

Compare Wordsworth's sonnet on the same subject, written in the same year (page 53).

EPIPSYCHIDION

For the meaning of the title, see line 238 ("soul out of my soul"). The motto may be translated as follows: The loving soul hurls itself beyond the created world, and creates for itself in the infinite a world all its own, very different from this dark and fearful abyss.

"The noble and unfortunate lady" to whom Shelley addressed this poem was Emilia Viviani, daughter of an Italian nobleman, who had been placed by her family in the convent of St. Anna near Pisa. "Emilia, beautiful, spiritual, sorrowing, became for him a type and symbol of what Goethe names 'the eternal feminine,' a type and symbol of all that is most radiant and divine in nature, all that is most remote and unattainable, yet ever to be pursued—the ideal of beauty, truth, and love" (Dowden, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, 378). Rapt away by his feelings, Shelley wrote this long and ardent poem. Presently, however, disillusionment set in, and he remarked bitterly that "the person whom it celebrates was a cloud instead of a Juno. . . . It is an idealized history of my life and feelings. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error—and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it—consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps, eternal." This yearning for the eternal conceived as perfect beauty,

"The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow,"

is also the theme of the brief preceding poem, "To——" (page 208), written in

the same year and doubtless inspired by the same "mortal image," Emilia.

Love, to Shelley, was not a double and ambiguous power,—earthly and spiritual; but a pure aspiration of the soul, an eager pursuit of the supernal principle of beauty. Yet, among the fragmentary poems published after his death, there are two that reveal, side by side, his double passion. One describes the insatiable thirst of sensuous, earthly love:

"To thirst and find no fill—to wail and
wander
With short unsteady steps—to pause and
ponder—
To feel the blood run through the veins
and tingle
Where busy thought and blind sensation
mingle;
To nurse the image of unfelt caresses
Till dim imagination just possesses
The half-created shadow, then all the
night
Sick . . ."

The other expresses his faith in a type of love that is spiritual, "immortal":

"Wealth and dominion fade into the mass
Of the great sea of human right and
wrong,
When once from our possession they must
pass;
But love, though misdirected, is among
The things what are immortal, and sur-
pass
All that frail stuff which will be—or
which was."

In "Epipsychidion," the two types of love are not differentiated or reconciled, any more than they were in Shelley's experience, but mingled, sometimes confusedly. Natural love and ideal love become one, the former disappearing as such, for, as Shelley said in regard to the poem, "You might as well go to a gin-shop for a leg of mutton, as expect anything human or earthly from me." Earthly associations he reduced further by publishing the poem anonymously and by prefixing the following remarks: "The Writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was

preparing for a voyage to one of the wild-est of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats."

(208.) 1-2. *that orphan* — — — *weepest on*: Shortly after Mary Shelley's birth, her mother died. "The name" is Shelley.

9-12. *This song* etc.: alluding to the old fable of the nightingale who loved a rose and remained faithful to its thorny bush in autumn when the flower had faded.

21-24. *Seraph of Heaven!* etc.: The particular woman is here, and often in the poem, symbolic of a love and beauty more than earthly. Shelley has more or less in mind the idealism of Platonic philosophers and poets. — For a satirical treatment of "Platonic love," see Byron's "Don Juan," Canto Second, stanza CCXII ff. (text, page 165; notes, page 681), written a year or so before the present poem.

(209.) 42. *Youth's vision* etc.: See, for instance, "To Mary," stanzas VI, XI (pages 177, 178).

43-44. *the world* — — — *unvalued shame*: To the world's view of his love Shelley is indifferent. Cf. the posthumous "Lines connected with Epipsychidion."

49. *one*: the name "spouse" (lines 46-47). — *the other*: the name "sister" (line 45). — Both names are applied explicitly in line 130.

91-102. *The glory of her being* etc.: an expansion of the idea of lines 77-79. Her divine radiance, issuing as light and motion from her eyes, and diffusing itself through and about her figure, takes form as a higher Presence. Its outlines

glow around her cheeks and out to her very finger-tips, flowing continuously with her blood. They suggest, and pass insensibly into, a vision of the Supreme Beauty.

(210.) 117. *third sphere*: Venus, the third sphere from the earth in the old astronomy. The goddess, he conceives, has assumed "mortal shape" and left her sphere "pilotless."

(211.) 169-173. *Narrow The heart* etc.: See note on "To the Moon" (page 688, above).

190 ff. *There was a Being* etc.: A vision of her is given in "Alastor," written six years earlier. See also "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," stanzas v-vi (pages 175-176).

(212.) 220-224. *like a dizzy moth* etc.: Cf. line 53, above; and the preceding poem, line 13 (page 208).

240. *sightless*: invisible.

(213.) 277. *One stood*: alluding to his wife, Mary.

321. *obscure forest*: See line 249.

(214.) 345. *Twin Spheres*: Cf. lines 46-48, 279-280.

368. *Comet*: This wild star of love (whomever it may represent) is now to become the quiet evening star (line 374). The "heart" (line 369) is Shelley's.

374. *folding-star*: the evening star that appears at the time for folding the sheep.

(215.) 404. *he or they*: Death, air, or lightning.

412. *halcyons*: kingfishers, which, according to ancient fable, nested upon the sea in the winter season, tranquillizing the waters while they brooded.

(216.) 477-482. *Yet, like a buried lamp* etc.: This is an expansion of lines 453-456. — Compare lines 77-79, 102-104.

507. *Parian floors*: floors of beautiful marble, such as the ancients quarried on the island of Paros.

(217.) 538-540. *Let us* — — — *inseparable, one*: Cf. lines 477-482, and the note, above. — For the whole idea of union with nature, in life and in death, compare Byron's "Childe Harold," Canto Third, stanzas LXXII-XC (pages 112-115).

546-572. *Or linger where* etc.: This Arcadian love-scene on the shore re-

calls that in "Don Juan," Canto Second (page 160), which was composed two years earlier. What is the difference in purport between the two episodes?

(218.) 601. *Marina, Vanna, Primus*: his wife Mary and two friends.

ADONAI8

The untimely death of Keats serving as the occasion, and the pastoral elegy as the form, Shelley in this poem has given impassioned expression to the grief of mortality and the sense of immortality. The development of his theme may be suggested as follows (numerals refer to stanzas):

I-XVII. THE IMMEDIATE GRIEF: the invocation to Urania; the dead Adonais; the lament of his Dreams, and of the things he loved in nature.

XVIII-XXXVII. THE SUBLIMER SORROW: the returning Spring, the transitory person; the mourning of Urania and the poets. XXXVIII-LV. THE SENSE OF ETERNITY: the compelling Loveliness; the living dead; Rome and decay; the call of the Eternal.

12. *Urania*: See note to page 18, line 776 (page 659, above). But in the present poem Urania becomes a thoroughly Shelleyan figure, — an embodiment of the spirit of poetry as conceived by him.

(219.) 29. *He*: Milton.

55. *Capital*: Rome, whither Keats had come from England seeking health. (220.) 93. *anadem*: fillet or garland for the head.

99. *dull*: i.e., "would dull," like "would break" in line 96. The "barbèd fire" is her burning pain.

104. *damp death*: the dampness of death on his mouth.

107. *clips*: embraces.

117. *Like pageantry* — — — *stream*: Cf. "Prometheus Unbound," Act First, lines 664-668 (page 193). — Shelley, from his character, is the special poet of water-vapor, in all its forms; as notably in "The Cloud" (page 199).

121-123. *and her hair* — — — *kin-dle day*: Aurora's bright eyes were dimmed with gathering clouds ("hair unbound"), whose rain would presently sparkle on the earth. In lines 120-126, the poet catches

the restless gloom which one may feel when awakened by thunder at dawn, *before* the rain begins to fall.

(221.) 133-134. *Than those* — — — *all sounds*: For love of the youth Narcissus, the nymph Echo pined away till nothing remained of her but her voice.

140. *Hyacinth*: a beautiful youth beloved by Apollo. Upon his death, the god changed him to a flower.

141. *Narcissus*: When Echo had pined away, Nemesis punished Narcissus by making him fall in love with his own reflection in the water. — The whole stanza is concerned with Spring and its flowers.

145. *Thy spirit's* — — — *nightingale*: This alludes to Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (page 252).

152. *his head*: the author (actually J. W. Croker) of an unsigned criticism of "Endymion" in the *Quarterly Review*, April, 1818, which Shelley and others believed to be the cause of the death of Keats.

160. *brere*: briar.

167-168. *in the stream* — — — *softer light*: In the life-giving vapors of the spring air (cf. line 164), the lights of the sky have lost their hard, wintry glitter. (222.) 186. *who lends what life must borrow*: i.e., a little time for living.

191-196. *Wake thou* etc.: See lines 12-16, above.

(223.) 250 *The Pythian of the age*: Byron is compared with Apollo, named Pythian because he slew the Python, a serpent that delivered oracles. Byron's "arrow" was his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

262. *shepherds*: the poet friends of Keats. The image is familiar in pastoral verse, e.g., Milton's "Lycidas."

264. *The Pilgrim of Eternity*: Byron (alluding to "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage").

268. *Ierne*: Ireland; the reference is to Thomas Moore.

271. *one frail form*: In this and the three following stanzas, Shelley presents the spirit of his own poetry, — the poetry of one ardently thirsting for beauty, yet "Girt round with weakness," a phantom in his solitude and unrelation with actual life.

(223.) 276. *Actæon-like*: As Actæon, having seen the goddess Diana in her bath, was turned into a stag and torn by his own dogs, so Shelley had seen the "awful Loveliness" and had spent his life in a self-consuming pursuit of it.

280. *pard-like*: leopard-like.

(224.) 298. *partial moan*: affectionate sorrow for one in whose fate he wept his own (line 300).

312. *he*: Leigh Hunt, who early befriended Keats. In some respects the passage fits better Joseph Severn, whose self-sacrificing attendance upon the stricken poet was, however, unknown to Shelley when he wrote this poem.

319. *nameless worm*: See note to line 152, above.

(225.) 345-351. *'Tis we* etc.: *We sleep*, because we fight madly, as in nightmare, with ills that are spiritually unreal; *we decay*, because we are ever consumed by strong passions or numberless yearnings.

362-387. *Thou young Dawn* etc.: This passage gives the antithesis for lines 120-180, and repeats a number of details, with change of form and purport.

366. *Cease, ye faint flowers*: Cf. lines 140-144.

375-387. *where'er that Power may move* etc.: For previous passages concerning this all-embracing power or spirit, see note to page 217, line 538, above.

(226.) 392-396. *When lofty thought* etc.: Cf. "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," lines 49-52, page 175, above.

399. *Chatterton*: See note to page 30, lines 43-44, above.

401. *Sidney*: Sir Philip Sidney, who, fatally wounded on the field of battle, died at the age of thirty-two.

404. *Lucan*: the Roman poet, who, condemned to death, ended his own life at the age of twenty-six.

406-409. *And many more* — — — *dazzling immortality*: Though the world scarcely remembers them, the good that was in them lives on,—in the depths of the Spirit beyond the reach of thought (line 398), — and thence exerts a continual effect upon the world: "transmitted effluence" recalls and epitomizes the thought of lines 380-396.

418-421. *As from a centre* etc.:

Realize the comprehensiveness of the spirit that lives in you and nature (cf. lines 380 ff.), in contrast with the smallness of your everyday personality.

424-495. *Or go to Rome* etc.: If you cannot live in hopeful thought (see the preceding stanza), seek death with Adonais (lines 457-459). For death means a complete union with the Spirit (lines 460-465) of which Adonais is now a part (lines 476, 494).

425. *'Tis naught*: It is no added glory to him.

(227.) 444. *one keen pyramid*: the tomb of Cestius, under which, as Shelley says in the preface, Keats was buried, "in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants" of Rome. — The grave of Shelley's child, William, was also there, and perhaps is alluded to in lines 453-455.

460-464. *The One* — — — *to fragments*: For "the One" and "the many" cf. stanzas XLII-XLIII and LIV. But here the poet emphasizes, exceptionally, the peace and elevation of the One, instead of its "plastic stress" (line 381).

(228.) 488-490. *my spirit's bark* — — — *to the tempest given*: Shelley means that both his aspirations and his troubles have been beyond the experience of the conventional crowd; cf. Byron's "Childe Harold," Canto Third, lines 710-715 (page 113).

Choruses from HELLAS

Somewhat as the earlier poets—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey—had heralded the French Revolution as the beginning of a new era in civilization, Shelley regarded the Greek war of independence from the Turks as prophetic of a Golden Age of freedom and love.—Byron's enthusiasm for the cause of freedom (without emphasis on love) and his connection with the Greek war, have already been made clear (biography, page 675; and his poems—"The Prisoner of Chillon," "Isles of Greece," etc.).

38, 40, 41. *were*: would be.

41-45. *If Liberty* etc.: Supply "to" before "life," "hope," "truth," "love." — The idea is similar to that of "Political Greatness," lines 1-6 (page 207).

(228.) 1060. *The world's great age begins anew*: the age of liberty, love, and innocence, as in the final passages of "Prometheus Unbound" (pages 198-199). But in this chorus the poet has in mind the ancient glories, real and mythical, of Greece. These, he hopes, will be surpassed in the golden age to come.

1068. *Peneus*: the chief river of Thessaly, passing through the proverbially beautiful vale of Tempe.

1071. *Cyclads*: the Cyclades, islands in the Ægean.

1072. *Argo*: Jason's ship, in which the Golden Fleece was brought.

1077. *Calyпсо*: the nymph who sought in vain to retain Ulysses on her island.

1080-1083. *Nor mix with Laiian rage* etc.: Oedipus, — son of Laius, king of Thebes, — freed that city from the oppression of the Sphinx by solving her fatal riddle. But the joy of liberation was mixed with the fearful sorrows ("rage") of the Laiian family. — The idea of this stanza is repeated in the closing stanza.

1090-1095. *Saturn and Love* etc.: "Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. 'All who fell,' or the gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the 'One who rose,' or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the pagan world were amerced of their worship; and the 'many unsubdued,' or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America" (Shelley's note).

1091-1092. *more bright and good . . . than One who rose*: Shelley's intention here is explained in his note: "The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a power who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent beings who were called into existence by his sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to his innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture." —

Cf. "Prometheus Unbound," Act First, line 546 ff.

TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION

In Italy Shelley saw much of Jane Williams, "an extremely pretty and gentle woman, apparently not *very* clever," as he describes her in a letter. Shelley's feeling for Mrs. Williams is given by Dowden as follows: "As a youth his imagination had dwelt chiefly on the heroic qualities in women, — the valor of pure love, intellectual courage, strength of character, a passion for reforming the world. . . . Now he acknowledged before all else the exquisite charity of woman, the grace of feminine tenderness — tenderness not of the heroic kind which can probe a wound to heal it, but that which lulls our pain as with some delightful anodyne, and trances the troubled sense, if only for an hour" (*Life*, II, 468).

(229.) 28. *its*: heaven's. — In form, the trees were distorted by stormy winds; in color, they were softened by warm winds.

51. *one fair form — — lifeless atmosphere*: Cf. "Epipsychidion," lines 91-94 (pages 209-210).

TO JANE

(230.) 23-24. *Where music and moonlight and feeling are one*: These three are often associated in Shelley's poetry. See "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," lines 5-12 (page 175), and the Moon's song in "Prometheus Unbound" (page 197).

WITH A GUITAR: TO JANE

10. *thine own Prince Ferdinand*: Jane's husband, Edward Williams, with whom Shelley formed a warm friendship, and with whom, eventually, he was drowned.

14. *From life to life*: The idea of reincarnation, used playfully throughout the rest of this paragraph, reflects Shelley's pursuit of ideal Beauty and Love in feminine form. See "Epipsychidion," line 190 ff (page 211).

LINES

(231.) 18. *Love first leaves the well-built nest*: Cf. "Love, from its awful throne of patient power In the wise heart" ("Prometheus Unbound," Act Fourth, line 557 f., page 199). Shelley has in mind the ideal or eternal Love, coming down from its habitation in the highest region of the human spirit, into the conditions of actual life.

19-20. *The weak one — — — once possessed*: The weak "nest," i.e., the human heart in all its frailty, has to endure the sad earthly course of Love, instead of holding it merely as an ideal sentiment. Love becomes something other than a youthful ideal: it becomes something that must be *endured*.

T. L. BEDDOES (1803-1849)

While an undergraduate at Oxford, Thomas Lovell Beddoes published the only volumes that appeared during his lifetime. He was then an ardent admirer — and one of the first admirers — of Shelley, whose *Posthumous Poems* were issued in 1824 mainly through his efforts. Always devoted to the Elizabethan dramatic poets, he proceeded to give his energies to the composition of plays in blank verse that are reminiscent of Webster, Tourneur, Marston, and others; the best is "Death's Jest-Book," described in a letter as follows:

"In it Despair has married wildest Mirth,
And to their wedding-banquet all the earth
Is bade to bring its enmities and loves,
Triumphs and horrors . . ."

Quite unable to construct a plot, he excelled in songs worthy of comparison with those of his masters, the Elizabethans and Shelley. Turning suddenly to the study of medicine, Beddoes went to Göttingen and thoroughly Germanized himself. For some twenty years he lived in Germany and Switzerland, studying, tinkering at his plays, cherishing radical political opinions, becoming more wayward and eccentric, and at length committed suicide.

DREAM-PEDLARY

(232.) 21. *Ill didst thou buy*: which thou didst ill buy.

THE SWALLOW LEAVES HER NEST

This poem may be read as a sequel to the last stanza of the preceding.

3. *the rain*: i.e., the chill rains of autumn, when the swallow goes.

6. *both*: "the swallow" and "the soul" (lines 1-2).

10. *and*: instead of "but," because the poet has felt the hurrying winter wind to be prophetic of spring. Compare this stanza with the first stanza of Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" (page 181).

12-14. *When a storm of ghosts* etc.: The spirits shall reanimate the dead like rain-storms awakening the seeds in spring.

LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859)

Hunt received his schooling at Christ's Hospital, London, after Coleridge and Lamb. At the age of twenty-one he began a long career as journalist. For a personal "libel" on the Prince Regent, he was condemned to two years' imprisonment, which he spent pleasantly, receiving his friends, reading the old Italian poets, speculating on versification, and writing a romance — his long, leisurely "Story of Rimini," in which the theme came from Dante, the handling was partly suggested by Boccaccio, and the verse-form was a new kind of heroic couplet only distantly akin to Chaucer's, — easy, colloquial, verging on the trivial and vulgar. Hunt's best work, however, is in his short pieces; which at times attain beauty, dignity, finish, as in "Abou Ben Adhem" (page 233); or a pleasing facetious humor, as in "The Fish, the Man, and the Spirit" (page 233). In his familiar essays he has grace, and good cheer, and spontaneity, together with his characteristic chattiness; less personal than Lamb, he recalls the light periodical essay of the "Spectator" type. The head of the "Cockney School" of writers, he was

towny without urbanity. In his interesting Autobiography, written late in life, he gives us pictures of Shelley, Keats, and Byron, and of the London life of the time.

As a poet, Hunt may be regarded as a link between Shelley and Keats. Like his close friend Shelley, he had faith in beauty, in generous kindness, and in political liberty. Like Keats, — especially the early Keats, his disciple, — he affected a familiar warmth of style.

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

(232.) 4. *summoning brass*: pans beaten to settle swarming bees.

11. *Both have your sunshine*: Cf. lines 3, 7.

THE FISH, THE MAN, AND THE SPIRIT

For Hunt's sympathy with fishes, and dislike of Izaak Walton, see his Autobiography, Chapter I.

(233.) 12. *joggles*: things that joggle; wriggling creatures.

14. *boggles*: shynings.

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

John Keats was the son of a livery-stable keeper, at a London inn, who had married the proprietor's daughter. While still in school, he lost both parents, and his guardians proceeded to apprentice him to a surgeon at Edmonton. After his indenture had been cancelled he went to London, in 1815, to walk the hospitals; it was two years more before he definitely abandoned surgery in favor of poetry.

His devotion to poetry had begun in his school-days at Enfield, where he drew the interest and presently the friendship of the junior master, Charles Cowden Clarke, a lover of literature. According to Clarke, he was not only a favorite of all, noted for "terrier courage," but also a voracious reader of history, travel, fiction, and especially books of ancient mythology. To him, Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*, far

from being a dull work of reference, was a realm of golden beauty and high romance. When his systematic schooling came to an abrupt end, he continued to read, translating the whole of the *Æneid*; and when Clarke presently lent him a copy of *The Faerie Queene*, "he went thro' it as a young horse thro' a spring meadow ramping." All of this early ardor for great literature he poured, with an intensifying restraint, into his sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (page 234), — one of his lyric masterpieces, published in his first volume of poems in 1817. Less salutary than the contagion of great literature was the influence of a friend whom he met through Clarke, — the poet Leigh Hunt; who, while he enhanced his disciple's fresh delight in beauty, also encouraged in him a tendency to slovenly structure, and to touches of the falsely chatty and the falsely luxuriant. The influence of Hunt may again be seen in Keats's next publication, the long poem "Endymion," an eminently youthful work in its rambling movement, its lack of sureness in style, its exuberance of color and music. Though these traits of the poem in some measure merited the contemptuous critical reviews that appeared in authoritative periodicals, — the review in the *Quarterly* was once believed to have "killed" John Keats, — it contains fine passages (such as the extracts in the text, pages 235-237) and discloses, to one familiar with Keats's work as a whole, the promise of his later achievement.

With "Endymion" ends his poetic apprenticeship: in the work of the next year, 1819, he is already a master. Yet

"Bitter restraint, and sad occasion dear"

compel us to pass almost without pause from the story of his poetic development to the story of his physical decline. "Endymion" was no sooner published than the first warnings of the poet's fatal disease appeared. His brother Tom, afflicted also with consumption, died after Keats had nursed him for several months. About this time, Keats met and fell in love with Fanny Brawne; but the state of his health made marriage impossible; and his illness

and frustrated passion merged into one agony. Nevertheless, he contrived to produce, within the single year 1819, a legacy of poems that, like the Grecian urn, will remain, "in midst of other woe" than his and ours, "a friend to man":—"The Eve of St. Agnes" (page 242); "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (page 248); a succession of odes including "To Autumn" (page 254), "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (page 251), and "Ode to a Nightingale" (page 252); and the narrative poems "Lamia" (page 269) and "Hyperion" (page 254). Early the next year, 1820, the coughing of arterial blood warned him of the end: in September he sailed for Italy with the artist Severn; in February he was dead in Rome.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

(234.) 3. *western islands*: British isles, hence British poetry.

8. *Chapman*: the Elizabethan poet, whose great translation, despite its rough metre and its inaccuracies, gave Keats the stimulation of Homer's pure, clear air ("pure serene,"—"serene" being a noun).

11. *Cortez*: It was Balboa, and not Cortez, who, from a mountain in Central America, discovered the Pacific Ocean.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

This and Hunt's sonnet on the same subject (page 232) were written in a friendly competition. Keats, unlike Hunt, devotes the sestet to description—with what purpose?

ON THE SEA

(235.) 4. *Hecate*: the moon, governing the tides.

13-14. *Sit ye — — — sea-nymphs quired!*: Compare the closing lines of Wordsworth's sonnet "The World is Too Much With Us" (page 45).

ENDYMION

"The story of Endymion and the moon, as retold by the Elizabethans, had early

captivated Keats's imagination: the loveliness of the moon-lit world—even in a London suburb—had become a kind of symbol for all beauty, and he himself a new Endymion, the implicit hero of the story he told; and, by the same symbolism, a lover of all loveliness, so that nothing in the universe of real or imagined beauty was irrelevant to his quest" (Professor Herford, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, XII, 90).

1. *A thing — — — for ever*: Cf. the first line of "On the Grasshopper and Cricket" (page 235).

(236.) 37-39. *each pleasant scene — — — our own valleys*: The poem was begun in the month of April and at the Isle of Wight. With his eyes upon the freshening grass and foliage of "our own" valleys, the poet thinks of April in the glens of Mount Latmus (in Asia Minor)—the opening scene and season of his story (see lines 69, 138).

50. *daisies, vermeil rimmed and white*: The tips of the petals of the English daisy are red. (Cf. Wordsworth's "To the Daisy," line 21, page 34.)

55. *let Autumn bold etc.*: The poem was actually finished late in the autumn. The last part is touched with autumnal mood and image (e.g., Book IV, lines 294-297).

HYMN TO PAN

Here "the dreamy pacing of the verse gathers into lyric concentration and intensity" (Herford). This hymn is a worthy forerunner of Keats's great odes.

234. *Eternal whispers*: Cf. the first line of "On the Sea" (page 235).

236. *hamadryads*: nymphs of trees. —The poet has seemed to see their hair when hazel branches, coming together in the wind, make for a moment a thickened patch of foliage.

241. *pipey hemlock*: This refers to a poisonous European plant with a hollow stem.

242. *Syrinx*: a nymph loved by Pan. She fled from him and, seeking refuge in a river, was changed into a reed (see line 239).

245. *trembling mazes*: This phrase

sums up the whole theme of the stanza, — the wild and sometimes awesome life of plants and trees, which is one expression of Pan (Nature).

(236.) 247. *turtles*: turtle-doves. These, in their myrtles, make a transition from the sylvan realm of the previous stanza to the soft pastoral growths of springtime in the present stanza.

250. *outskirt*: border.

(237.) 258. *pent up butterflies*: chrysalises.

259. *the fresh-budding year*: Cf. lines 37 ff., and the note, above.

272. *naiads' cells*: hiding places of nymphs of the streams.

306. *thy Mount Lycean*: Lyceus, the mountain on which Pan was born.

WHEN I HAVE FEARS

8. *the magic hand of chance*: the magical felicity with which a matured poet may hit upon the right phrase; cf. line 4.

9. *fair creature of an hour*: Written before Keats knew Fanny Brawne, this probably refers to an ideal, not a particular, person.

EPISTLE TO REYNOLDS

(238.) 67-72. *O that our dreamings — — — We jostle*: O that our dreams and fancies in the night-time would reflect the high and beautiful things of nature, rather than the experiences of our own spirit during the day, for our everyday life is full of conflict.

73. *Admiral-staff*: the flagstaff of the admiralship. — Keats refers to his own immaturity, as in the preceding poem.

75. *High reason, and the love of good and ill*: appreciative insight into the conflict of good and evil in the world.

78-82. *imagination brought Beyond its proper bound* etc.: When the imagination breaks bounds, and yet reaches no high insight (see preceding note), it wanders in a hopeless purgatory between earth and heaven, guided by neither conventional nor spiritual law.

88. *lampit*: limpet, a kind of mollusk.

93-98. *but I saw Too far into the sea* etc.: The poet's imagination, preoccupied with the fierce struggle for existence that goes on in nature, loses touch with the kindly beauties of nature. In his present "mood" (see lines 105-106) the struggle seems to him "eternal;" see note to lines 78-82, above.

(239.) 105. *Kamtschatkan*: Kamchatkan. — Keats means here that he would rather be an instrument of dull goodness than a prey to romantic morbidity. His true clue is cheerfulness.

TO MAIA

This fragment of an ode was written on May Day. The most beautiful of the seven sisters known as the Pleiades, Maia was identified, by the Romans, with an Italian goddess of the Spring.

1. *still*: ever.

3. *As thou wast hymned* etc.: Keats refers to the Roman cult of Maia (Baïæ, near Naples, being a favorite Roman watering-place), then to an earlier cult of the goddess in Greek Sicily, and then to the still earlier cult in the isles of Greece.

ROBIN HOOD

13. *ivory*: whistle.

21. *seven stars*: the Pleiades.

30. *pasture Trent*: the pasture land along the River Trent, which flows through Nottinghamshire, near the forest haunts of Robin Hood.

33. *morris*: a popular outdoor dance in which the performers wore fantastic costumes and bells.

34. *song of Gamelyn*: The reference is to a pseudo-Chaucerian "Tale of Gamelyn" and, generally, to similar tales and songs of outlawry.

36. *grenè shawe*: green wood.

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

The Mermaid Tavern was a noted resort of poets and wits in the time of Shakespeare.

ODE: BARDS OF PASSION

Written in Keats's copy of Beaumont and Fletcher, on a blank page before the tragi-comedy "The Fair Maid of the Inn."

FANCY

The fickleness of delight is rendered in a quick, rippling music—as in Shelley's "Song: Rarely, rarely comest thou" (page 204). What is the difference of emphasis between the two poems?

(241.) 11-12. *And the enjoying* — — — *its blossoming*: Our very capacity for enjoying the beauties of springtime is itself as transitory as those beauties.

21. *shoon*: shoes.

35. *heaped Autumn's*: Here, and in "caked snow" (line 20), Keats may have intended a spondaic effect, in which case the "ed" would not be sounded as a separate syllable. His stated rule—which, however, he did not consistently follow—was to sound the mute "e" in "ed" unless he elided it in manuscript. In these selections, it is marked with an accent (èd) when the emotional and rhythmic movement seems certainly to require the syllable (e.g., "wingèd" in line 5). The "e" is not elided when it is clearly mute (e.g., "white-plum'd" in line 49; given "white-plum'd" in standard editions).

53-54. *And every leaf* — — — *self-same shower*: Flowers from all stages of spring may be assembled, in fancy, and refreshed by a single rain. No doubt Keats's artistic sense keeps him from adding here the flowers of summer and autumn. The seasons succeed each other in a swift but orderly array, beginning and ending with autumn (lines 40, 66).

73. *weary*: weary the observer.

81. *Ceres' daughter*: Prosperine, who became the wife of Pluto, ruler of Hades.

85. *Hebe*: Jove's beautiful cup-bearer.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Like the present poem, Keats's "Isabella," written a year earlier, is a medie-

valistic story of romantic love. The two poems may be fruitfully compared as to purport and value.—In inventing the story of Porphyro and Madeline, Keats had in mind the familiar type of Border escapade used by Scott in "Lochinvar" (page 89). But Porphyro has no rival—except his own "looks immortal" in the girl's magic dream (line 313).

(242.) 1. *bitter chill*: In popular tradition, St. Agnes' Eve, January 20, was likely to be the coldest night of the year. Keats uses the cold to frame the warm picture that presently appears, and to harmonize with the suggestion of remoteness and magic that runs through it.

16. *oratories*: oratories, small side-chapels for prayer. They are "dumb" because at this time no one is praying there except the kneeling sculptured figures. (243.) 70. *amort*: as if dead.

71. *her lambs unshorn*: When the mass was celebrated on St. Agnes' Day, two lambs were offered to the church, and later their wool was spun and woven by the nuns.—The lamb, symbolic of youth and innocence, was traditionally associated with the virgin St. Agnes (Latin *agnus*, lamb).—See lines 115-117.

(244.) 126. *mickle*: much (Scotch).

(245.) 171. *Merlin paid his demon* etc.: The magician Merlin, according to one legend, was the offspring of demons, and was in the end overpowered by means of one of his own spells.

173. *cates*: choice viands.

174. *tambour-frame*: double hoops to hold embroidery.

198. *frayed*: frightened.

218. *gules*: red, in heraldry. See line 216.

(246.) 239-243. *Flown, like a thought* etc. Madeline's soul in sleep is lightly escaped, and quietly harbored, from the emotional stress of everyday life (lines 239-240). It is concealed from malignant powers, like a thing religiously precious; and withdrawn from fostering powers, like a thing of complete and self-contained beauty (lines 241-243).

241. *Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray*: i.e., like a Christian mass-book in a building, or region, where swarthy pagans are worshipping. "Clasped"

may mean "shut," which is the word Keats originally used here; or "tightly grasped," i.e., in the protecting hand of a Christian.

(246.) 257. *drowsy Morphean amulet*: a charm to keep her asleep.—Morpheus was the god of dreams.

271. *These delicates he heaped* etc.: In Keats's conception of the old superstition, the lover, in the girl's vision, would invite her to feast with him, thus ending her fast. See stanzas VI, XX.

277. *hermite*: hermit, devotee.

(247.) 324. *St. Agnes' moon hath set*: The suggestion is that the charm of the night is declining.—The rising storm was prepared for in lines 127, 253.

(248.) 344. *seeming*: look.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

Keats developed this melodious fantasy from the suggestion of the title (meaning, "The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy"), which had caught his eye in a collection of medieval verse. See line 292 of the preceding poem, which was written a couple of months earlier.

(249.) 18. *fragrant zone*: Cf. "fragrant bodice" in the preceding poem, line 229.

42. *gloom*: gloaming, twilight—here, before dawn.

TO SLEEP

The idea is essentially the same as in the account of Madeline's sleep in "The Eve of St. Agnes," stanza xxvii (page 246), but quite different from Wordsworth's idea in his sonnet "To Sleep" (page 46).—In form, Keats uses here an original device: the first two lines of the sestet echo two of the rimes of the octave.

5. *soothest Sleep*: "Sooth" commonly means "true." In "The Eve of St. Agnes," line 266 (page 246), it means "soothing and delicious." In the present case Keats probably has in mind both meanings.

9-12. *the passèd day will shine* etc.: Cf. the "Epistle to Reynolds," line 70 (page 238).

ON FAME

Compare the attitude toward Fame in the sonnet "When I have Fears" (page 238).

2. *temperate blood*: Cf. Shakespeare's "blood and judgment . . . well commingled." Indeed, the central theme of this sonnet recalls the well known passage in "Hamlet" (III, ii, 70 ff.).

8. *her pure grot*: See note to page 237, line 272, above.

13-14. *Why then should man* — — — *a fierce miscreed*: Cf.: "For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit his own self?" (Luke ix, 25). In summing up his *poetic* thought, Keats finely hints a parallel with *religious* thought, in the words "world," "grace," "salvation," "miscreed."

ODE TO PSYCHE

This "latest born and loveliest vision far" (line 24) of all the Olympian mythology was, says Keats in a letter, a late creation of the ancient mind: "Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervor—and perhaps never thought of in the old religion—I am more orthodox than to let a heathen Goddess be so neglected." According to Apuleius, Psyche is a beautiful princess who incurs the jealousy of Venus. Cupid, commanded by Venus to inspire an unworthy love in Psyche, himself falls victim to her charm and, conveying her to a delightful spot by night, himself unseen and unknown, embraces her until the dawn. The story goes on to tell (though Keats barely alludes to the later events) how the sisters of Psyche, jealous of her, persuaded her that she had been embracing a monster, and how Psyche, seeking to know the truth, held a lamp over her sleeping lover, the loveliest of the gods, and by mischance allowed a drop of hot oil to fall upon his shoulder. Cupid awoke and fled. Her happiness at an end, Psyche

henceforth wandered miserably in search of her lover and was condemned to hard labors by Venus — labors that would have broken her had not Cupid, invisibly pursuing her fortunes, given her comfort and aid. At length, through the power of Cupid, the hatred of Venus was appeased, and Psyche, reunited with her divine lover, became immortal. — Psyche, whose name is Greek for "soul," is commonly imagined with the wings of a butterfly as an emblem of immortality.

"In this pleasing story Psyche evidently represents the human soul, which is purified by passions and misfortunes, and thus prepared for the enjoyment of true and pure happiness" (Smith's *Classical Dictionary*, ed. Blakeney). Of this spiritual implication in the tale Keats does not avail himself.

Along with Keats's Ode, one might advisedly read William Morris's rendering of the tale in "The Earthly Paradise," and also Robert Bridges' "Eros and Psyche," perhaps his best work.

(250.) 14. *budded Tyrian*: buds of Tyrian purple.

20. *At tender eye-dawn of auro-rean love*: when, upon awakening, the light of love would rise tenderly again in their eyes.

26. *Phoebe's sapphire-regioned star*: the moon. As goddess of the moon, Artemis (Diana) was given the surname Phoebe.

27. *Vesper, amorous glowworm*: Venus as the evening star.

41. *lucent fans*: translucent wings. "Lucent" is another Keatsian favorite; cf. "lucent syrops" in "The Eve of St. Agnes," line 267 (page 246).

42. *the faint Olympians*: the Greek gods, now faded, who inhabited Mount Olympus.

57. *moss-lain dryads*: tree-nymphs lying in the moss at the foot of their trees — which are here the poet's "branchèd thoughts" (line 52). — In the "Hymn to Pan," lines 236-237 (page 236), the dryads, or hamadryads, are gracefully embodied in their trees.

(251.) 61. *stars without a name*: star-like flowers unknown in the world (grown by "the gardener Fancy," line 62).

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

The urn is "a composite conjured up instinctively in his mind out of several such known to him in reality or from engravings" (Sidney Colvin, *John Keats*, 1917, page 416). Through this imaginary object, the poet conveys to us his sense of the clear, quiet power of beauty, persisting above the incessant shift and decay of "all breathing human passion" — beauty in art and the spirit transcending the beauties of actual life. Observe how this theme is prepared in the scene of stanza 1; developed with rising ecstasy, in stanzas II and III, from two particular features of that scene; serenely echoed in the new scene of stanza IV; and lifted, finally, into the region of quiet thought in stanza V.

(251.) 3. *Sylvan historian*: explained by line 5.

6. *In Tempe or the dales of Arcady*: Tempe, a lovely valley in Thessaly, and Arcady (Arcadia), a picturesque and untroubled region in the Peloponnesus, became synonymous with ideal natural beauty and idyllic quiet and contentment.

13. *sensual*: pertaining to the senses; sensuous.

41. *brede*: braid, embroidery.

44. *tease us out of thought*: Cf. "Epistle to Reynolds," line 77 (page 238).

(252.) 45. *cold pastoral*: Notice how this image suits the present stanza, as "sylvan historian" suits stanza I.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

The mood of this swift little ode will not be fully grasped by a reader who misses the half-smile on the lips of the author. It is clearest in lines 18-20. It lurks in the heaped-up adjurations of stanza I; and, perhaps, in the extraordinary image of lines 27-28.

1. *Lethe*: The Byronic attitude on this subject is here reversed; see note to page 171, line 29 (page 682, above).

2. *tight-rooted*: i.e., so as to squeeze out the poisonous juice.

4. *Proserpine*: See note to page 241, line 81, above.

5. *yew-berries*: The yew grows commonly in English graveyards.

(252.) 6-7. *Nor let — — — mournful Psyche*: Do not make mournful insects the symbols of your soul. — For "Psyche," see the introductory note on Keats's ode to her, above.

9-10. *For shade — — — the soul*: By deepening your gloom into numbness, you will prevent your spirit from becoming sorrowfully alert to external beauty (as in the next stanza).

15-20. *Then glut thy sorrows etc.*: Expend your mournful mood upon the transitoriness of the things you love, — thus sharpening your appreciation of their loveliness. See the preceding note.

21. *She*: Melancholy (see line 26). — The thought of this stanza is, that the true and divine kind of melancholy arises from the transience of earthly beauty and joy, and can be deeply shared only by him who is capable of keen delight in life (lines 27-28). Keats throws it into contrast with the selfish and morbid kind of melancholy shown in stanza I.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

A careful comparison of stanza VII with stanza V of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (page 251) will show the essential likeness in thought between the two poems, and also their notable difference in method and atmosphere.

As in the two preceding odes, each stanza has ten lines, but the eighth is shortened — with what effect?

2. *hemlock*: See note to page 236, line 241, above.

7. *Dryad*: See note to page 250, line 57, above.

12. *deep-delved*: See note to page 107, line 35, above.

13. *Flora*: goddess of spring and its flowers.

(253.) 16. *Hippocrene*: fountain of the Muses on Mount Helicon. — In the poet's present mood, the rich red ("blushful") wine of southern France seems the true Hippocrene or inspiration for his verse.

26. *Where youth etc.*: Keats had particularly in mind his loved brother Tom, who had died of consumption a few months earlier.

29-30. *Where Beauty — — — beyond tomorrow*: See "Fancy," lines 11-12 (page 241), and the note (page 698).

32-33. *Not charioted by Bacchus — — — wings of Poesy*: Leopards or panthers drew the chariot of the god of wine. — This passage reverses the idea of lines 15-16; see the note to line 16, above. The intoxication of stanzas I and II has now given place to a quieter mood. In stanzas IV to VI the poet is hushed by the nearer presence, in imagination, of the "full-throated" song and the "embalmèd darkness."

51. *for*: although, seeing that. It is followed by the correlative "Now" in line 55.

66. *Ruth*: See "Ruth," Chapter II. (254.) 69-70. *Charmed magic casements — — — faery lands forlorn*: The magical world of mediæval romance opens here to the nightingale's song; the listeners at the windows, however, are *human* beings. — Compare Wordsworth's "To a Highland Girl," lines 15-16 (page 35), noting just what elements the two passages have in common.

75. *thy plaintive anthem*: Cf. "thy high requiem" (line 60). The change of epithet agrees with the change of mood.

76. *the near meadows*: the fields bordering the forest. — This time, the bird, — not the poet as in stanza IV, — is fancied to be moving; why?

TO AUTUMN

This ode, except for line 23, omits the cause of sorrow so prominent in the three preceding odes. Its serener and rounder tone is aided by the additional verse (the tenth) in each stanza.

7. *gourd*: used in its older sense, as comprising melons, pumpkins, and the like.

12. *store*: abundance. — In this stanza the four graceful attitudes of Autumn recall the figures on the "Grecian Urn" (page 251), but are more definitely sculptured. They represent four practical labors of the season.

25-26. *While barrèd clouds — — — with rosy hue*: On September 22 Keats wrote to a friend: "I never liked stubble-

fields so much as now, -- ay, better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow, a stubble plain looks warm, in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it."
(254.) 28. *river shallows*: willows along the river.

30. *hilly bourn*: the hilly region bounding the level scene just described; "bourn" means "boundary." — Sheep still feed on the hills near Winchester where this poem was written.

31. *Hedge-crickets*: grasshoppers. — This stanza repeats the idea of the sonnet "On the Grasshopper and Cricket" (page 235).

32. *red-breast* — — — *garden croft*: The English robin, which sings freely in the autumn, is a familiar visitor in the enclosed garden spaces (crofts) adjoining cottages and town houses. It stays all winter, unlike the swallows "gathering" for migration.

HYPERION

"At first he thought of the poem to be written as a 'romance': but under the influence of 'Paradise Lost,' and no doubt also considering the height and vastness of the subject, his plan changed to that of a blank verse epic in ten books. His purpose was to sing the Titanomachia, or warfare of the earlier Titanic dynasty with the later Olympian dynasty of the Greek gods; and in particular one episode of that warfare, the dethronement of the sun-god Hyperion and the assumption of his kingdom by Apollo" (Colvin). Keats's poem, though never finished, was thus conceived as perhaps the most ambitious of the many poetic revivals of the Titan legend. On these other revivals, see the note to Byron's "Prometheus," page 678, above, and the note to Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," page 686, above. It will be observed that Prometheus, a character ill suited to convey Keats's prevailing ideas, does not appear at all in "Hyperion." Not proud suffering, or stoical endurance, or warm sympathy was to be the keynote of the poem, but the sense of beauty:

"... for 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in
might"

(Book Second, lines 228-229).

The supremacy of the Olympians is the supremacy of a fuller beauty.

The material that Keats used in writing the poem was indeed meagre — chiefly such secondary sources as classical dictionaries. But he brooded long over his theme, till it was vital and luminous in his mind; and as it grew there, it took on something of the spirit of his master Milton, something of the classical restraint and serenity. At the same time, it is plain that Keats remained a child of his own age: less luxuriant than in his early work, he is still far from the classical simplicity, still rich and complex and modern; and his ethical and spiritual imagination, while increasingly profound, rarely suggests the Miltonic grasp and the classical certitude. Becoming himself aware of incertitude in his epic purpose and style, Keats a year later attempted, with powers weakened by illness, a reconstruction of "Hyperion" in a more romantic and personal mode, as "The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream." This fragment, which should be compared with Book First of the present poem, is deeply tinged with the thought of death, and has some fresh and powerful passages.

BOOK FIRST

At the beginning, Keats presents the Titans just after they have been overthrown, as Milton at the beginning of his epic presents Satan and his angel cohorts after their momentous defeat. "They have been dethroned from power, Saturn is an exile hiding in the deep glens, but their ruin is still incomplete; Hyperion still is lord in the sun, and the others are at liberty to gather for a great council" (Woodberry, *The Torch*, 1905, page 92; the whole passage, 92-102, is worth reading).

(255.) 13. *naiad*: See note to page 237, line 272, above.

30. *Ixion's wheel*: The gigantic strength of Thea, wife of Hyperion (she is the "one" of line 23), is suggested by this

climactic image. Ixion, having boasted that Hera loved him, was bound to a great wheel forever rolling in the air.

(256.) 74. *Tall oaks, branch-charm'd by the earnest stars:* The quietude of the "tranced summer-night" (line 72) is summed up in the massive stillness of the oaks. The branches, to one who stands and looks upward, seem charmed into motionlessness by the intensely quiet stars that appear among them. — In its rich suggestiveness, the passage is a good example of the modern feeling for nature.

95. *spouse of gold Hyperion:* Thea, "a daughter of Uranus and Terra" (Heaven and Earth), "married her brother Hyperion, by whom she had the sun, the moon, Aurora, etc." (Lemprière, tenth American ed.) "Hyperion is often taken by the poets for the sun itself" (Lemprière).

105. *nervous:* sinewy, strong, — the original sense.

118. *space starred, and lorn of light:* that region of space which is lighted by stars, and that region which is deprived of light.

(257.) 131. *strings in hollow shells:* lyres made with tortoise shells.

133. *I will give command — — where is Saturn?:* Saturn, in bewildered excitement, identifies himself with the real and strong "self" which seemed, in his despair, to have parted from him utterly (line 113 ff.). Then, remembering his helplessness, he wonders again where the real Saturn can be.

145. *Where is another chaos?:* i.e., to serve as material for a new world.

147. *The rebel three:* Jupiter, Pluto, and Neptune.

181. *Aurorian:* pertaining to Aurora, the dawn; elsewhere Keats uses the form "Auroral."

182. *eagle's wings:* The eagle was sacred to Jupiter.

(258.) 192. *For:* instead of.

209. *vermeil:* (pronounced "vermil") vermilion, brilliant red.

216. *Hours:* See note to page 204, line 37, above.

246. *Tellus:* the Earth.

(259.) 255-258. *the phantoms pale* etc.: Cf. lines 227-230. The apparitions are

associated with things antipathetic to the sun-god: cold and gloom, marsh and mist.

273-274. *the glancing spheres* etc.: Keats has in mind the shifting circles and other forms which appear in the sun when looked at with the naked eye. (The term "colure" he seems to be using in a sense of his own, not in its proper astronomical sense of a circle in the celestial sphere, as it was used by Milton, "Paradise Lost," IX, 66, from whom he doubtless derived the word.)

277-280. *hieroglyphics old — — many centuries:* Pursuing a fancy suggested by these figured lights cast by the sun, Keats fables that they were copied and interpreted by successive sages in ancient sign-writings. Their wisdom, now lost to us, was won by gazing upon these sun forms through many centuries.

297-298. *the porches wide Opened* etc.: i.e., the eastern portals of Hyperion's palace, as in lines 264-268.

307. *Coelus:* the same as Uranus, god of the sky, "an ancient deity, supposed to be the father of Saturn, Oceanus, Hyperion, etc. He was son of Terra, whom he afterwards married" (Lemprière).

315-316. *And at the fruits thereof, what shapes they be* etc.: Coelus wonders at the offspring of himself and Terra (Earth), since, unlike their parents, they have distinct and beautiful shapes. He knows that they were really formed by mysterious powers greater than their parents (lines 309-312) — that they manifest a "beauteous life" which is unseen and eternal (lines 316-318).

(260.) 319. *new-formed:* Supply "shapes" from line 315.

323. *first-born:* Saturn.

330. *sad:* serious, sober.

BOOK SECOND

4. *Cybele:* "a goddess, daughter of Coelus and Terra, and wife of Saturn" (Lemprière); therefore queen of the Titans. — See Byron's "Venice and Sunset," lines 10-11 (page 153), and the note.

9-11. *Crag jutting — — monstrous horns:* For Keats's *nature-dread*, — i.e., his sense of the elemental and inhuman savageness of nature, — compare the

"Hymn to Pan," first stanza (page 236); and the "Epistle to Reynolds," line 94 ff. (page 238). — Does this sense appear in Wordsworth's, Byron's, or Shelley's poetry? (For example, see the mountain-scene in "Prometheus Unbound," Act First, line 31 ff., page 182).

(261.) 19-20. *Coeus* etc.: *Titans*. "The most known of the Titans are Saturn, Hyperion, Oceanus, Iapetus, Cottus, and Briareus, to whom Horace adds Typhæus, Mimas, Porphyrio, Rhæus, and Enceladus" (Lemprière).

22-28. *Were pent — — — gurge of pulse*: Some of the Titans "must be regarded as personifications of the extraordinary powers of nature, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the like" (Smith's *Classical Dictionary*, under "Ægeon").

28. *gurge*: whirlpool.

34-35. *a dismal cirque — — — forlorn moor*: The gigantic fallen Titans are compared with the circle of vast stones used by the Druids as a sacred place, the most famous being on Salisbury Plain in the south of England. Without cover, these temples had for their altar-roofing ("chancel vault," line 37) the over-arching sky. Keats had in mind the Druid stones near Keswick in the Lake District, which he had visited at "shut of eve" (line 36).

45. *plashy*: speckled.

53-54. *Asia — — — Tellus*: Asia, a Titaness, was born of Tethys, who was born of Tellus (Earth). Caf (or Kaf), whom Keats here makes the mother of Asia, was a vast mountain in Asiatic fable. — Keats's brief sketch of Asia (lines 56-63) is enough to suggest that, had he developed her character, she would have been very different from the Asia of Shelley; see "Prometheus Unbound" (page 195) and note (page 687).

61. *Even as Hope* etc.: Does this image suit the present atmosphere?

64. *shelve*: slope or ridge.

66. *Shadowed*: loomed like a gloomy shadow. Enceladus (usually identified with Typhon, line 20) was the strongest and fiercest of the giants. Compare Moloch in "Paradise Lost," Book II.

74-78. *Phorcus* etc.: Phorcus, a Titan sea-deity, was father of the three

frightful maidens known as Gorgons. — Clymene was the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys; later is mentioned her "mouthèd shell" (line 270). — In the midst of all the fallen Titans lie Themis, "a daughter of Coelus and Terra, who" subsequently "married Jupiter against her own inclination" (Lemprière); and "Ops the queen," identical with Cybele (line 4).

(262.) 92-98. *the supreme God — — — A disanointing poison*: Here and elsewhere Keats emphasizes the idea that calmness, above the clash of passions, is properly divine. With this passage compare Book First of this poem, lines 328-340 (page 260).

134. *Uranus*: the same as "Coelus" (Book First, line 307 ff., page 259).

(263.) 163. *Oceanus*: the only Titan, according to the ancient story, who had not joined in war against the Olympians.

165. *astonied*: amazed (stronger than the modern "astonished").

168. *from no Athenian grove*: The insight of Oceanus proceeds, not from converse such as Athenian sophists and sages enjoyed, but from solitary "cogitation in his watery shades."

170. *with locks not oozy*: because, his place usurped by Neptune, he was enforced "to bid sad farewell" to his empire, the ocean; he has joined the downcast Titans to study their woe and give consolation — as appears presently (lines 232-243).

191-199. *From chaos and parental darkness* etc.: According to Greek myth, in the beginning was Chaos, a confused mass, the mother of Erebus and Night. Erebus and Night, who were brother and sister, became the parents of Æther and Hemera (Day). — Cf. "Paradise Lost," VII, 233-249; II, 890 ff.

(264.) 203-205. *to bear all naked truths — — — the top of sovereignty*: See note to page 262, line 92, above.

208-211. *we show beyond — — — purer life*: We evidently surpass our parents, in our compact form, will, free action, etc.

215-217. *Nor are we — — — shapeless Chaos*: Is this a fair comparison? Does Keats approve Oceanus's line of argument? Or does he regard it as rather

sophistical? (The speech of Belial ("Paradise Lost," II, 226-228), prototype of Oceanus in skill of tongue, Milton plainly regards as sophistical.)

(264.) 228-229. *the eternal law* --- *first in might*: Cf. the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," stanza v (page 251).—Oceanus's speech thus carries to its completion the thought about beauty which was brought out through Coelus in the preceding Book. But Coelus's words, in keeping with his nature, were mystic, and not elaborately reasoned (lines 309-320, page 259).

244. *pozed*: old form of "posed," i.e., puzzled.

248. *Clymene*: See line 76.

263. *clime*: whole atmosphere of the region.

(265.) 304. *Enceladus*: The tenor of his ensuing speech was prepared for in lines 64-72, 107-109.

(266.) 333-334. *For though* --- *loss of realms*: While scorning Oceanus's argument, Enceladus replies to it by asserting that his misery is *not* entirely due to loss of rule. He proceeds to recall the peace, innocence, and beauty of life that the Titans have lost. His idea seems to be that Jupiter and his brothers are not necessarily superior to the Titans in either beauty or might. Contrast lines 327-332 with lines 224-229. And see the note to lines 215-217, above.

358. *beetling gloomy steeps*: Cf. line 10.

374. *Memnon's image*: a huge statue called Memnon, in Egypt. It was said to give forth a harp-like sound (line 376) at sunrise.

BOOK THIRD

(267.) 10. *Delphic harp*: poetry, of which Apollo (whose most famous oracle was at Delphi) was the patron god—commonly represented as holding the lyre ("harp") used by the Greeks in accompanying song and recitation. In line 13 he is called "the Father of all verse."

12. *Dorian flute*: Next to the lyre, the flute was the favorite musical instrument used for accompaniment; though first associated with Asia Minor, it was taken up by the Dorian peoples of Greece proper.

—With lines 11-12, compare "Paradise Lost," I, 549-551, — a passage which Keats had praised, though perhaps without understanding its "Dorian mood" (i.e. martial and grave melody).

14. *Flush everything*: Let every thing flush.

24. *Delos*: the smallest of the Cyclades islands, the birthplace of Apollo—who, at this stage of Keats's story, is still there (see the preceding Book, lines 275 ff., page 265).

31-32. *his mother fair And his twin-sister*: Leto and Artemis.—His father was Jupiter.

(268.) 75. *that bow heroic to all times*: that bow symbolic, to all ages, of heroism.

82. *Mnemosyne*: Memory. She was one of the Titans, as indicated in Book Second, line 29 (page 261). But she became, by Jupiter, the mother of the Muses, a relationship expressing the bond between art and tradition.. To Mnemosyne, Apollo owes the gift of the lyre, according to Keats; usually, however, Apollo was said to have received it from Hermes or to have invented it himself.

LAMIA

Keats does not follow the old Greek legend of Lamia, a beautiful woman of whom Jove was enamored and whom Hera, out of jealousy, transformed into a child-devouring monster. Instead, he uses a late development of the legend, finding, in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), a reproduction of the tale as told by a third century author, Philostratus:—"Philostratus, in his fourth book *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phoenician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him; but she, being fair and lovely, would

live and die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her awhile to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance, but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant: many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece."

This passage from Burton (which Keats printed as a note at the end of "Lamia") afforded the poet an admirable impetus for his characteristic art. Packed with subtle and swift description, eager in its emphasis on the senses and on the enchantments of love, full of yearning for the attainment of a perfect experience, the poem is a typical expression of the spirit of the early nineteenth century through the magic art of Keats. The poet had been studying, with good effect, the couplet verse of Dryden; and his style here, though less ambitious than in "Hyperion" (composed nine months earlier), is generally more *certain* in its touch.

PART FIRST

(269.) 15-16. *languid tritons* — — — and adored: Triton, referred to in Wordsworth's sonnet "The World is Too Much With Us" (page 45), was son of Poseidon (Neptune), and a mighty sea-deity. Later mythology conceived a multiplicity of tritons, with bodies fishlike from the waist down, attending the greater sea-gods — as the "hoofed satyrs" (line 14) attended the wood-gods. Here the tritons are "languid" from the double cause suggested.

20. *to choose*: to choose from. — The meaning of lines 19-20 is that no poet could imagine and describe such wonderful objects.

26. *Fallen in jealous curls*: His hair is disordered, as his form is ruddied, by his jealous eagerness and haste.

46. *cirque-couchant*: lying coiled.
(270.) 47. *gordian*: intricate (like a gordian knot).

58. *Ariadne's tiar*: In the myth of Ariadne, Bacchus is said to have given her a crown of seven stars, which, when she died and was transfigured, became a constellation.

63. *Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air*: i.e., for the serene climate of Sicily, where she had dwelt before carried off by Pluto to the darkness of Hades.

78. *Phoebean dart*: arrow (or sun-ray) of Phoebus Apollo.

81. *Star of Lethe*: Hermes (Mercury), thus termed because his bright form was often seen in Hades, whither it was one of his functions to lead departed souls.

88. *serpent-rod*: Hermes' herald-staff, or caduceus, given to him by Apollo; the white ribbons originally fastened to the staff were changed, in late artistic representations, into two serpents symmetrically placed.

103. *bleared Silenus' sighs*: Silenus, a satyr accompanying Bacchus, was a fat, jovial old man with a bald head, commonly intoxicated.

(271.) 114. *psalterian*: musical, with a Biblical connotation; hence appropriate after the preceding adjective ("devout"). The psaltery, mentioned in the Old Testament, was a harplike instrument.

115. *Circean head*: i.e., resembling that of the nymph Circe, the enchantress who entertained Ulysses voluptuously.

116. *Blushed a line damask*: Cf. lines 47-54; "damask" is a pure, luminous crimson, like that of the damask rose.

123. *The God* — — — *sank serene*: At first he had hovered, impatiently; see lines 66-67.

133. *the lithe caducean charm*: He touched her with his rod; see note to line 88, above.

138. *brede*: See note to page 251, line 41, above.

(272.) 193. *their pettish limits*: Pleasure and pain, as if fretfully or pettishly discontent with limits, are ever seeking to

encroach on each other's territory (cf. "swift counterchange" in the next line).

(272.) 198. *still unshent*: yet unspoiled and blameless (though artful); cf. line 192.

207. *neréids*: These daughters of Nereus and sisters of Thetis (line 208) were nymphs of the sea — as the "naiads" (e.g., line 261, below; and "Hyperion," line 13, page 255) were nymphs of freshwater.

211. *palatine*: palatial, with, perhaps, a suggestion of the ancient Roman palaces and gardens on the Palatine Hill.

212. *Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzan line*: Mulciber, or "hammer god," is the same as Vulcan, the Roman god of fire. In Homer he appears as the great artist of the gods, maker of shining buildings. — *far piazzan line* images the long, low, many-columned structure of ancient temples and the like.

(273.) 235-236. *His phantasy* — — — *Platonic shades*: His thoughtless fancy gave way to musing upon the high mysteries of the Platonic philosophy. — Keats thinks of Lycius as frequenting, like other young Greeks, the Academic groves.

248. *Orpheus-like at an Eurydice*: With the passionate eagerness of Orpheus, when he could not forbear looking back at his wife on the way up from Hades, though the look made her vanish from him and return to the shades; see lines 253-255.

265. *a descended Pleiad*: The Pleiads were seven virgin sisters, devoted to each other, who were metamorphosed into the constellation of that name. Keats associates them with the late-Greek idea of the music of the spheres (lines 266-267).

(274.) 320. *Adonian feast*: festival in honor of Adonis, beloved of Venus (see line 317). Corinth was a centre of Venus-worship.

329. *peris*: A peri, in Persian mythology, is a kind of fairy, descended from angels.

333. *Pyrrrha's pebbles*: the stones thrown by Pyrrha from which a new race of women sprang up, after the deluge, in Greek mythology.

(275.) 375-377. *Apollonius sage* etc.: See note to lines 235-236, above.

386. *Sounds Æolian*: musical tones as of the Æolian harp.

394. *flutter-winged verse*: "flutter" is a noun. Unlike the inhabitants of Corinth in the preceding lines, the "verse" can flit after the two lovers into their house.

PART SECOND

6. *the non-elect*: those who are not conventional moralists. — In lines 1-10, Keats intimates, ironically, that he cannot furnish the close of his story with a "moral" (doubtless expected by "the elect") concerning the harmful effect of wealth upon love.

(276.) 35. *so arguing*: since it argued.

38-39. *Because he mused* — — — *passion's passing-bell*: Cf. Book First, lines 233-242 (page 273).

(277.) 122-124. *A haunting music* — — — *charm might fade*: This exquisite, solitary music seems to rise from the very mood of Lamia herself, — her melancholy brooding upon the beauty she is creating; cf. lines 133-137.

(278.) 185. *libbard's*: leopard's.

187. *Ceres' horn*: Ceres was the goddess of grain and the harvests, — the fruits of the earth. The horn, or cornucopia (horn of plenty), really belongs, not to her, but to Amalthea; it had the power of becoming filled with whatever its possessor willed.

(279.) 224. *willow*: symbolic of sorrow.

224. *adder's tongue*: popular name for a fern with a frond and fruiting spike which together suggest the mouth and tongue of a serpent; and for a number of plants, e.g., lily-of-the-valley, that superficially resemble this fern.

225-226. *strip for him The thyrsus*: i.e., crown him with ivy stripped from the staff of Bacchus (Dionysus).

229-230. *Do not all charms* — — — *cold philosophy*: Cf. line 39. — But here, as context and sequel show, Keats is thinking of cold rationalism devoid of sympathy for beauty. Presently he uses the word "philosophy" in its old sense as comprising natural science (lines 234 ff.). His ad-

miration for philosophy as equivalent to "high reason," or wisdom, appeared in the "Epistle to Reynolds," lines 71-76 (page 238). In his delightful Letters to his Friends, he shows an increasing desire to study philosophy as a means of winning deeper thought and higher calmness for his poetry. A few weeks after his twenty-second birthday he exclaimed, "O for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts" (Nov. 22, 1817). Sixteen months later, — half a year before beginning "Lamia," — he writes that poetry may be "not so fine a thing as philosophy — for the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth."

(279.) 231-238. *There was an awful rainbow once* etc.: Keats has in mind Newton's prismatic analysis of the rainbow, with which he compares Apollonius's destructive scrutiny of Lamia, presently to be described. The passage does not express a general hostility to science, but the fact that beauty escapes those who are concerned only with calculable forces. — On her first appearance, Lamia was imaged as "rainbow-sided" (Part First, line 54, page 270).

(280.) 263-264. *The stately music* — — — *a thousand wreaths*: The myrtle, rather than the other foliage in the wreaths (see lines 215-220), wilted because it was sacred to Venus. The "stately music," like the myrtle, is in supernatural sympathy with Lamia; see note to line 122, above. This music therefore ceases before the "voice" and "lute" of the guests (line 265).

301. *perceant*: piercing (pronunciation: pursant).

BRIGHT STAR

Written on September 30, after Keats had embarked for Italy, though a preliminary draft had been made in the previous year. The first nine lines express the yearning that Keats had increasingly felt for a calm and large steadfastness; see note to page 279, lines 229-230, above. Yet he wishes not to be remote (lines 2, 9) from human beauty and love. — With the sestet compare "Ode on a Grecian Urn," lines 25-30 (page 251).

(281.) 14. *swoon*: This word — a favorite with Keats, partly, or largely, because of its rich sound — was used to express intense love in "Lamia," Part First, lines 219, 289 (pages 272, 273).

WHITE: NIGHT AND DEATH

Though lacking the magic phrase and rhythm of the preceding sonnet, this one has a compelling march from first to last line, and a fine poetic idea. Milton gave Adam's first sleep ("Paradise Lost," VIII, 287 ff.); but not his first experience of darkness. Meditating on this, Joseph Blanco White (1775-1841) found a fresh outlet for the old human sense of the relation between night and death. Perhaps the sestet grew directly from his own religious difficulties. At this time he had passed from the Catholic to the Anglican church, and was moving toward Unitarianism. His autobiography, *Travels of an Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion* (1833), is revealing for the spirit of the time. The hope expressed in the poem may help to account for its powerful effect on the aged and regretful Coleridge, who pronounced it the finest sonnet in the language.

H. COLERIDGE: WHITHER IS GONE THE WISDOM

Peacock's view of the Romantic spirit (see page 173 and the note) should be compared with this. The sonnet is the criticism by Hartley Coleridge (1796-1849) of the time-spirit that had shaped his own life and work. He had actually had that free upbringing in the presence of nature which his great father so poetically prophesied and desired for him; see S. T. Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," lines 44-64 (page 77). It fostered his sensitive appreciation of nature's beauties, and of humble affections; while it aggravated his in-born defect, — his lack of "the self-constraining will" (see line 7 of the sonnet). With a firmer character he would have developed more fully his most distinctive gift, — that of fine criticism. It appears often in his sonnets, which are the best of

his verse. Of Wordsworth's poetry, he writes that

"sweet thoughts on every page
Breathe for the soul admonitory balm.
'Tis Nature teaching what she never
knew:

The beautiful is good, the good is true."

(See, for example, "Tintern Abbey," lines 107-111, page 8).

(281.) 12. *quit-rent*: a small sum regularly paid by feudal freeholders in lieu of actual services.

13. *philomels*: nightingales.

14. *roundelays*: songs in which a refrain or idea is continually repeated. — The two closing lines of the sonnet intend a contrast with lines 2-3.

THOMAS HOOD (1799-1845)

Hood may be considered "the most richly endowed of all the poets intermediate between Shelley and Keats on the one hand, and Tennyson and Browning on the other" (Hugh Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era*, 1910). A versatile journalist, brave in long poverty and disease, Hood found a vent for his fun-loving spirit, and a means of supporting his family, in a succession of popular-humorous poems. The lengthiest of them is "Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg" (of gold). Through its jocularly runs an invective against the worship of money and comfort. From this mode, Hood passed to the serious and plain power of "The Song of the Shirt." Another side of his poetry, reminiscent of Hunt and Keats, is illustrated by "Ruth."

RUTH

Compare the glimpse of Ruth in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," lines 65-67 (page 253).

(282.) 15. *stooks*: shocks, — i.e., upright sheaves of grain massed together.

FAREWELL, LIFE

Written on Hood's deathbed. — The shift of atmosphere, from night and earth

to morning and the rose, is carried on subtle changes of tone and rhythm.

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

Hood had in mind the recent trial of a woman charged by her employer with pawning articles that belonged to him, — though, as he said, she was making a "good living." It was brought out in evidence that she earned at trouser-making seven shillings a week, on which she had been trying to support herself and family. In the poem, however, Hood develops a *single* theme and effect. — Compare his "Bridge of Sighs," written shortly afterwards: which is the better poem of the two?

15. *Where woman — — — to save:*
This was a dogma in Mahometanism.

22. *gusset*: an extra strip sewn on, to give strength or width in some part of the garment.

45. *That shattered roof*: Cf. line 12.

PRAED: THE VICAR

The work of Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1802-1839), unlike Hood's, is quite in the vein of eighteenth century social wit. "Praed is the embodiment of Eton and Cambridge and St. James's; the very spirit of good English society without its insolence. He has the code, the wit, the manners, the way of taking itself for granted that belongs to the caste, but is something more as well; for in him the caste turns upon itself, and describes and mocks itself, though still it knows of no other self, and refuses to mock too hard." (Elton, *A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1830*, II, 282). His verse has admirable finish; he made himself the master, in particular, of the form illustrated by the present poem, — an eight-line stanza with double rhymes. His *Poems of Life of Manners*, of which "The Vicar" is a good example, often remind one of the gently satirical portraiture of Jane Austen and Oliver Goldsmith. Compare the present parson with him of "Wakefield" and the "Deserted Village."

(283.) 9. *lissom*: lithesome, pliant.

20. *ponderous Barrow*: Isaac Barrow, the seventeenth century scholar and divine.

22. *Pundit*: a Brahman.

(284.) 46 *Deist*: one who, like the eighteenth century Deists, based his faith in reason rather than revelation.

52. *Jerome . . . Athanasius*: learned fathers of the primitive Christian church.

64. *Sylvanus Urban*: "The Urban Countryman" (probably a rural "column" in a fictitious journal).

84. *Quae genus*: the beginning of a definition of irregular nouns in Lilly's Latin Grammar ("Those whose gender," etc.)

98. *gentle Johnian*: A "Johnian" is a graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge.

103-104. *Hic jacet* etc.: "Here lies William Brown, a man worthy of praise" (literally, "not to be presented with no laurel").

R. S. HAWKER (1804-1875)

Educated at Oxford, Robert Stephen Hawker became parson of Morwenstow — a community given to smuggling and even wrecking — on the coast of Cornwall. An eccentric reformer, he closed his life in the Roman Catholic Church. His most ambitious works are *Records of the Western Shore*, and *The Quest of the Sangraal* (1864); the latter (like Hawker's missionary life and personality) has a special vigor not present in Tennyson's treatment of the Arthurian story.

MAWGAN OF MELHUACH

Hawker gives the following note on this ballad: "Gilbert Mawgan, a noted wrecker, lived in a hut that stood by the sea-shore at Melhuach. . . . Among other crimes it is said that he once buried the captain of a vessel, whom he found exhausted on the strand, alive! At the death of the old man, they told me that a vessel came up the Channel, made for Melhuach bay, and lay-to amid a tremendous surf. When Mawgan ceased to breathe, she stood-out to sea and disappeared."

(285.) 19. *their*: refers to "men" in line 2.

ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTER- ING SPIRITS?

The title is quoted from *Hebrews*, I, 14.

BARNES: BLACKMWORE MAIDENS

Son of a farmer, William Barnes (1801-1886) was born in the Vale of Blackmore in Dorsetshire. In this southern county he held various positions in the Church, and became widely known as the author of poems in the broad dialect of Dorset, — notable for their tender feeling, understanding of rural life and character, and perception of natural beauty.

3. *down*: treeless upland of the south of England.

4. *clote*: yellow waterlily.

6. *tow'r*: the church-tower (see line 14).

7. *bricken tuns*: brick chimney-tops.

8. *Stour*: The name of the river is locally pronounced to rhyme with "tower" (two lines above).

31. *en*: him.

(286.) 37. *twiel*: toil.

W. S. LANDOR (1775-1864)

"I never did a single wise thing in the whole course of my life, although I have written many which have been thought such," Walter Savage Landor remarked in his last years, with characteristic forthrightness and exaggeration. Passionate and irascible by temperament, he lived much to himself. The son of a successful physician, he retired, after classical schooling at Rugby and Oxford, to several years of solitary study in Wales. Three years later, in 1798, appeared his very romantic "epic" entitled "Gebir." In 1808 he proceeded to Spain to take part in the war against Bonaparte. During the remainder of his long life, he resided partly in England, partly in Italy; publishing voluminously, both poetry and prose, strengthening his hold on that ancient world in which he really dwelt, and mastering his creative

faculty. His outstanding achievements are, in prose, the many *Imaginary Conversations*, and, in verse the *Hellenics* and a large number of exquisitely shaped short poems.

Temperamentally akin to some of the great poets of the early century, he was related with them, also, in his passion for freedom and republicanism (which took the Byronic aristocratic form) and in his enthusiasm for the ancient Hellenic world, — an enthusiasm not, however, the same as that of Byron, Shelley, and Keats. While Keats, for example, absorbed his Grecian lore almost unconsciously, and made it a part of his own fair dreaming, the hard-working Landor found in the ancient Greek and Latin world, as in Milton among the moderns, the opportunity for a discipline that was at once artistic, intellectual, and ethical. The ancient forms of thought, as Lord Houghton said, "gave to his character the heroic influences which alone subdued the wilfulness of his temperament, and amid all the confusions of life kept his heart high and his fancy pure." Acknowledging no debt to any contemporary writer, disrelishing the "green lanes" in which the romantic poets had strayed (as he indicates in "Lately our songsters loitered in green lanes," page 296), he strove to "climb A loftier station" — that land of pure beauty conjoined with firm control and greatmindedness, which he found in ancient Hellas. "Nowhere in the range of English literature" — to quote Lord Houghton once more — "is the glory and happiness of moderation of mind more nobly preached than in the writings of this most intemperate man; nowhere is the sacredness of the placid life more hallowed and honoured than in the utterances of this tossed and troubled spirit."

ROSE AYLMEYER

(286.) 1-2. *sceptered race*: Rose Aylmer, upon whose death Landor wrote these elegiac lines, was the only daughter of the fourth Baron Aylmer and the sister of his successor, who was a Governor-General of Canada.

PAST RUINED ILION

This and the other "Lyrics to Ianthé," written for the most part in the years 1802-1806, were inspired by an early attachment "on which Landor never ceased to look back as the strongest of his life, and for the object of which he continued until her death to entertain the most chivalrous and tender friendship" (Sir Sidney Colvin, *Landor*, in *English Men of Letters*).

2. *Alcestis*: the heroine of Euripides' tragedy of the same name.

WITH ROSY HAND

2. *A boss*: i.e., a close mass.

GIVE ME THE EYES

9. *arkite*: belonging to Noah's ark. (For the dove and the olive-leaf, see *Genesis*, VIII, 8-11.)

ON THE SMOOTH BROW

(287.) 2. *myrtle and rose*: emblems of love and joy, in contrast with the constancy and peace suggested by the "duller olive."

YES: I WRITE VERSES

2. *flaccid*: (pronounced "flaksid") flabby.

17. *gallopade*: a lively dance.

TO ROBERT BROWNING

(288.) 10-14. *But warmer climes* etc.: Browning, with his bride, had gone to Florence, crossing from Marseilles to Leghorn by boat. The sea-journey is extended by Landor's fancy to the southwestern shore of Italy, the region of the sirens. Sorrento, the birthplace of the poet Tasso, is on the Bay of Naples; and the romantic, rocky Amalfi is a little farther along the coast.

ON "THE HELLENICS"

These lines form a proem or introduction to the fifty or so "Hellenics" upon which Landor was at work for a large part of his life. By an Hellenic (or *Idyllium Heroicum*, as he named the form when he wrote in Latin hexameters) he meant a short tale on an heroic, or mythological, or idyllic theme of Greek origin, composed in blank verse. Sometimes he used dialogue only, without narrative linking; such poems are really metrical "Imaginary Conversations," and may be profitably compared with those in prose, especially the series on Greeks and Romans. The reader who desires a fuller acquaintance with the Hellenics than is afforded by the present volume may turn to "Acon and Rhodope" (sequel of "The Hamadryad," page 290), "Coresus and Callirhoe," "Menelaus and Helen," "The Death of Paris and CEnone." All of these pieces,—indeed all the poems that Landor wrote,—should be read slowly and repeatedly, if they are to reveal, through their deceptive simplicity and restraint, the warmth and depth of their feeling.

Of the three poems that here follow the proem, the first two illustrate the "graver," the third the "lighter" song (see line 14), even though the third—"The Hamadryad"—ends in death.

(288.) 3-4. *the silent sands* — — — *long strides*: the banks of the river Simoïs, the scene of many a resounding struggle in the Trojan War; the Homeric heroes are suggested in the phrase "long strides." "Simoïs" has three syllables, only the first of which, in Landor's line, receives metrical stress.

5-8. *higher grounds* — — — *far below*: Mount Ida, whence the Simoïs flows to the Trojan plain. It was here that the judgment of Paris took place—see the introductory note to Tennyson's "CEnone," page 719, below.

8. *happy Ares*: Ares (Mars), the god of war, was represented as delighting in the din and destruction of war. His lover was Aphrodite (Venus), the goddess of love, whose winning of the golden apple led to the Trojan War.

10. *Anapos*: a winding Sicilian

river, here representing idyllic poetry, as the Simoïs above represents heroic poetry,—"lighter song" (last line) as opposed to "graver."

THE DEATH OF ARTEMIDORA

Landor set this Hellenic in the frame of one of his most ambitious imaginary conversations in prose, "Pericles and Aspasia," Letter 85. The poem illustrates the "curious *arrestedness* of his pictures. . . . He has the air of representing not so much the imaginary object, as some marble or painted representation of it that he has first imagined. He chronicles the moment of checked emotion that is proper to a solid group or to the figures on a vase. Keats might have taken examples for his great ode from Landor's verse or prose" (Elton, *A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1830*, II, 18). This statuesque picture of husband and wife, Elpenor and Artemidora, reminds one of the ancient Attic tombstones, of which Percy Gardner has said: "The family groups in which husband and wife are hand in hand, or in which a mother is taking leave of the children grouped about her, are among the most pleasing works of ancient sculpture, free from all painful expression and from all exaggerated sentiment, but full of the poetry of the life of simple duty and natural affection" (*The Principles of Greek Art*, 66). (Figure 9, page 65, in the work just cited, gives a good example.)

5. *other rivers*: rivers of the lower world; see note to line 19, below.

(289.) 11. *Iris stood over her dark hair, unseen*: Iris, messenger of the gods, standing ready to release her spirit by loosening her hair.

19. *not hers*: This was succeeded, in the first edition, by the following lines:

"With her, that old boat incorruptible,
Unwearied, undiverted in its course,
Had plashed the water up the farther
strand."

The "old boat" is, of course, that of Charon, conveying the shades of the dead across the rivers of the lower world to their destination.—With or without these

lines, the poem was designed to close upon the plain fact of death. Landor does not wish to suggest, — even if Elpenor does, — the brighter Elysium distinguished (by Latin poets) from Hades in general, the dim region of the dead. For his attitude toward death expressed in *propria persona*, see "Death stands above me" (page 296) and other poems.

IPHIGENEIA AND AGAMEMNON

The story of Iphigeneia was familiar tradition among the ancient Greeks, and is alluded to repeatedly in their literature. She was the daughter of Agamemnon, "king of men" (line 15) and leader of the expedition to Troy. While the Greek fleet was at Aulis, on the way to Troy, it was becalmed by the goddess Artemis (Diana), out of anger against Agamemnon because he had offended her. To appease her and so release the fleet, Agamemnon, following the advice of the seer Calchas, proceeds to offer his daughter as a sacrifice. It is the moment of final decision, with all the pathos and controlled passion accompanying it, that Landor, with his sculpturesque art, chose for his poem. — The Greek legend goes on to tell how Artemis, at the sacrificial rites, put a hart in the place of Iphigeneia, and bore the maiden to Tauris, where she became the priestess of Artemis' temple. What would have been the effect if Landor had continued the story to this point?

(289.) 26. *laid down my hair*: i.e., a lock of hair as a propitiatory offering to Artemis (Diana) before marriage; cf. line 33.

33. *Hymen's*: Hymen is the god of marriage.

34. *those who mind us girls the most*: those who have us most in their care, viz., Artemis and the nymphs (lines 27 and 30).

35. *our own Athena*: Athena (Minerva), goddess of wisdom, the favorite deity of the kingdom of Mycenae, over which Agamemnon ruled.

(290.) 56. *fillet*: a leafy garland round the head, worn at sacrifices by the priest and other participants.

THE HAMADRYAD

Three years before this poem appeared, the American poet Lowell published "Rhoecus," another rendering of

" . . . this fairy legend of old Greece,
As full of gracious youth and beauty still
As the immortal freshness of that grace
Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze."
(Lowell)

Lowell was then a disciple of Keats, and he found in this legend just such a tale as Keats loved to tell with all his embroidery of delicate images and rhythms. Nymphs are everywhere in Keats's poetry; for the nymphs known as hamadryads, see the "Hymn to Pan," lines 236-237 (page 236). Of Keats's poetic style, Landor said that it "is extremely far removed from the very boundaries of Greece"; Landor's own diction is unquestionably much nearer the Greek. In "The Hamadryad" his tone not infrequently recalls Keats; but in the outline of the story itself the poet follows faithfully the late Greek writers who had told it. — The word "hamadryad" comes from two words meaning "with" and "tree," the nymph being the spirit of the tree, born with it and dying with it.

2. *Gnidos, the light of Caria*: Gnidos, or Cnidos, a celebrated seaport city of Caria in Asia Minor, to which travellers came to see the statue of Aphrodite by Praxiteles. The sea-waves are visible from the hills where Rhaicos was born.

6. *rose and myrtle* — — — *inborn*: For "rose and myrtle" see note to page 287, line 2, above. — *Inborn*: native, of local origin.

7-10. *If from Pandion* etc.: If the festival rites were not local but derived from Athens — Pandion being a legendary king of Athens and Athena the special deity of that city — then the olive, sacred to Athena, was used, woven with violets clustered in regular masses ("bosses").

12. *one was their devotion*: Aphrodite (Venus), the chief deity of the city. The power of Love is shown in the lines that follow.

(290.) 16. *Poseidon* — — — *reveres*: Remember that the "mutable" Aphrodite was said to have been born by springing from the foam of the sea.

17-22. *And whom his brother* etc.: While Proserpine, a daughter of the gods, was amusing herself by gathering flowers round the plains of Enna, Pluto, god of Hades, bore her away to be his queen in the realms below. Pluto, or Dis, was the brother of Poseidon (Nep-tune).

86. *platan*: plane-tree.

(291.) 94. *Cydonian bow*: bow from Cydonia, in the island of Crete, famed for its archers.

(292.) 117-118. *the source Whence springs all beauty*: the deities of nature.

126. *Within it*: in the moss (cf. lines 56-58).

131. *Ye men below*: See lines 24-29, 40-41.

133-135. *as she sate Before the shepherd* etc.: See the note to Tennyson's "Enone," page 719, below.

147-148. *now begins the tale* etc.: the story he asked for previously (line 120), but which he is still too enraptured to hear (line 154).

(293.) 190. *religion*: old and sacred custom.

205-206. *but the nymph as oft invisible*: Supply "was" before "invisible." She rendered herself so whenever he came.

(294.) 221. *lentisk . . . oleander*: fragrant shrubs.

243. *the Hours*: See note to page 204, line 37, above.

254-257. *that light* — — — *see no more*: These superb lines recall the lyric "Give me the Eyes" (page 286).

261. *anise cakes*: cakes flavored with the seeds of the anise, a Mediterranean plant.—The checker-board, in place of nature's kindly fruits, is ominous! (295.) 278-280. *From that day* — — — *insect wing*: This is the reverse, so to speak, of his initial experience of the Hamadryad; see lines 49-52.

284. *milk and honey*: propitiatory offerings to the spirits of the wood.—The plain close of the narrative recalls Wordsworth's "Michael" (page 29): these two

poems afford a suggestive contrast in pastoral poetry.

TO YOUTH

The closing stanzas recall Moore's "Of in the Stilly Night" (page 97). Which is the better poem?

4. *the Hours*: As in "The Hamadryad," line 243 (page 294).

9. *befell*: Used in the usual sense of "happened," and also, as the next line shows, in the literal sense of "fell" (on it). This follows out the image in line 8.

SO THEN, I FEEL NOT DEEPLY

In his life of Landor, Sidney Colvin asks: "Did Landor then really, we cannot help asking ourselves, feel very deeply the breaking up of his beautiful Italian home or not? A few years before he could not bear his children to be out of his sight even for a day; did he suffer as we should have expected him to suffer at his total separation from them now? . . . The same question which we have thus been led to ask ourselves as to the depth or lack of depth in Landor's private and domestic feelings, seems to have been addressed to him in person by some friend about this time. Here is his reply:"—and the biographer quotes the present poem.

Landor's "reply,"—if it is such,—sets forth a view of the relation of experience and poetry that recalls Wordsworth's well-known dictum, cited in the note to "I Wandered Lonely," page 661, above.

(296.) 7. *near Memory's more quiet shade*: The remembrance of the grief must be "near," i.e., keen, and yet quieter than the grief itself.—The image as a whole is that of a brook which runs on, from a steep gorge or the like, into a quiet forest.

LATELY OUR SONGSTERS LOITERED

Compare the thought of "On 'The Helenics'" (page 288).

(297.) 6. *Ilissus*: a river of Attica.

PART TWO: THE MIDDLE NINETEENTH CENTURY

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN
(1801-1890)

"We in Oxford," wrote Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy*, "brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth,—the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection." To the recognition of this truth Arnold attributes the strength of the "great movement which shook Oxford to its centre" in the 'thirties. "It was directed, as any one who reads Dr. Newman's *Apology* may see, against . . . the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the cardinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832, and local self-government, in politics; in the social sphere, free-trade, unrestricted competition, and the making of large industrial fortunes; in the religious sphere, the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion." To this middle-class liberalism—as well as to the expansive revolutionary spirit of the beginning of the century, from which industrial liberalism grew—many of the leading minds of the Victorian age opposed themselves; seeking, each in his own way, some principle of control to give shape and direction to the intellectual and moral forces of the modern world.

One of these leading minds was Newman, whose task it was to combat the anarchic tendencies of the age within the sphere of religion. "My battle," he wrote in his spiritual autobiography, "was with liberalism; by liberalism I mean the anti-dogmatic principle and its developments. . . . Dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion: I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery." To religion as a mere sentiment, and to rationalism as a substitute

for religion, Newman opposed himself with all the strength of his subtle mind, his deep spiritual sense, and his winning personality. With Keble, Pusey, and others he sought to reestablish religion, within the Church of England, on a firm foundation. "I had a supreme confidence in our cause; we were upholding that primitive Christianity which was delivered for all time by the early teachers of the Church, and which was registered and attested in the Anglican formularies and by the Anglican divines. That ancient religion had well-nigh faded away out of the land, through the political changes of the last 150 years, and it must be restored. It would be in fact a second Reformation." As this reformation progressed, Newman drew closer and closer to the Roman Catholic Church, until, in 1845, he took the decisive step of transferring his allegiance: "it was like coming into port after a rough sea." His spiritual struggle had come to an end. "From the time that I became a Catholic, of course I have no further history of my religious opinions to narrate."

It was in prose—in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, his *Idea of a University*, his works on church doctrine, and his remarkable sermons—that Cardinal Newman made his chief contribution to Victorian literature. But the rare qualities of his mind are also plainly present in his poems.

THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD

This and the following poem Newman wrote at sea while returning from the Mediterranean just before he threw his energies into the Oxford Movement. "It is the voice," he said, "of one in darkness, asking help from our Lord."—For the title see *Exodus*, XIII, 21-22.

(299.) 11. *garish*: glaring, gaudy.—This second stanza as a whole shows what "the

garish day" symbolizes. Observe that Newman throws it into contrast with the "Light," as well as the "night," of the first stanza.

FLOWERS WITHOUT FRUIT

Written a few days after the preceding poem, this reads like a necessary sequel and complement. As the first poem is an expression of his emotional and mystic faith, so this poem is an expression of his austere ethical effort, without which "brightest transports" and "choicest prayers" are wanting in fruit. Note that the image implied in the title and four opening words is effectively resumed in the last line.

TRENCH: RETIREMENT

Later Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Chenevix Trench as a Cambridge undergraduate belonged with Tennyson and others to the club of "The Apostles." But he differed on the subject of religion from his companions. The free-thinking of these young liberals seemed to him often loose, and fraught with dangerous consequences. He was respected by them for his generous ardor and strength of character. — Compare the opening lines of this and the preceding poem.

WADE: THE TRUE MARTYR

This sonnet, like the preceding, points to the goal of spiritual integrity, but proposes a very different road to it. In each case, just what obstacles is the soul required to face and to overcome?

(300.) 6-7. *The fulness* — — — and *thrills*: Cf. *Epistle to the Romans*, VIII, 22, and context. But in this poem the subject is given a turn of thought and expression foreign to St. Paul, and characteristic of the nineteenth century.

13-14. *Whose thought* — — — *Cranmer's heart*: The story was that after the brave and energetic Archbishop Cranmer was burned for heresy, in 1556, his heart was found entire among the *ashes*. But here, through the expression "perfect

amid the *flames*," the poet dexterously throws his emphasis upon Cranmer's actual resolution, instead of its legendary aftermath. — This closing couplet is peculiarly felicitous, considering the title and opening quatrain of the sonnet.

DISRAELI: WELLINGTON

Compare the three last sonnets from Wordsworth (pages 55-56), which were written not long before the present one. At this time, Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), through pen and politics, was advancing the idea of so-called "Tory democracy": namely, that the government should be conservative in form, but widely serviceable to the people. He and others of his generation distrusted political revolutionism as a means of progress, and believed in a strong central government that could hold the respect and imagination of the people. (This side of Disraeli is well brought in P. E. More's *Aristocracy and Justice*.) But such a government, he thought, must abandon the favorite doctrine of "laissez-faire" and provide measures of social and industrial reform.

The Duke of Wellington, whose defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo is referred to in the opening lines, was disliked by radicals for his Toryism. But his character, as the sonnet suggests, exerted a strong influence during his old age. His death a few years later (1852) was commemorated by Tennyson's "Ode," and by Longfellow's "Warden of the Cinque Ports."

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

(1809-1892)

"The King is dead, long live the King!" — When Byron died in 1824, Alfred Tennyson, then a youth of fifteen, "thought the whole world was at an end; I thought everything was over and finished for everyone — that nothing else mattered. I remember I walked out alone and carved 'Byron is dead' into the sandstone." Keats was dead, Shelley was dead, Coleridge had ceased to count as a poet, Scott had turned to the novel, Wordsworth's poetic energy

had ebbed: so that with the death of Byron the last of the kings of the romantic dynasty had gone, and a new age waited for its leader and spokesman. That leader and spokesman was destined to be Tennyson himself. In 1827, three years after Byron's death, Alfred and Charles Tennyson published a volume of somewhat Byronic *Poems by Two Brothers*. In 1830, Alfred published *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*; in 1832, *Poems*; and in 1842, *Poems* in two volumes. With the publication of the last of these collections, a new king of poetry had assumed the throne.

His childhood and boyhood had been spent at Somersby Rectory in Lincolnshire, amid peaceful English landscapes that imprinted themselves on his mind and heart, and not far from the North Sea coast, whose waves were to sound again and again in his poems. Instructed for years by his father, Tennyson had a sound preparatory training, and in 1828 entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he became one of twelve young literary enthusiasts known as "The Apostles," another of whom was Arthur Henry Hallam, described in *In Memoriam* as "the master bowman of the group." "The effects produced on the minds of many at Cambridge," Arthur Hallam wrote in a letter, "by the single creation of that Society of 'Apostles' is far greater than I dare to calculate, and will be felt both directly and indirectly in the age that is upon us." The dozen friends were interested in far more than poetry; as Tennyson's son reports, they "read their Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Butler, Hume, Bentham, Descartes, and Kant, and discussed such questions as the Origin of Evil, the Derivation of Moral Sentiments, Prayer, and the Personality of God." While in college, Tennyson won the Newdigate prize with a poem in blank verse on "Timbuctoo;" and, in his *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, gave promise of greater things. Leaving Cambridge in 1831, Tennyson spent most of the next two years (partly in travel in the Pyrenees and on the Rhine) with Arthur Hallam, who died in 1833.

The early death of his dearest friend, "as near perfection as mortal could be," signaled a turning-point in Tennyson's

development. The years that followed were a time of absorption and reflection. Richly endowed by nature, Tennyson now disciplined himself and his art by studying the ancient classics and English literature, by reshaping his own early poems, by working hard at new compositions, and most of all, probably, by attempting to relate his mind and spirit to the ultimate mysteries of life as these appeared in the new age that followed the romantic revival. It is with a profounder art and a profounder message that he comes before the public once more in the 1842 *Poems*: "Morte d'Arthur" (later republished as "The Passing of Arthur," page 378), "Ulysses" (page 311), "Locksley Hall" (page 314), "Sir Galahad" (page 319), "Break, Break, Break" (page 320), and others. Such poems as these mark an extraordinary advance over the prettiness and sweetness of his earlier work. The volumes were received with acclaim, and henceforth Tennyson had only to pass from triumph to triumph.

During the half century that followed—from the *Poems* of 1842 to his death in 1892—Tennyson's biography is mainly an account of the volumes that he published. In 1847 came *The Princess*, to which he later added the exquisite lyrics (pages 320-321) that surpass the poem in which they were imbedded; in 1850, the year of his marriage and of his succession to the Laureateship, *In Memoriam* (this was his *annus mirabilis*); in 1855, *Maud*, containing "Come into the Garden" (page 363); in 1859, *Idylls of the King*, added to in later years; in 1864, *Enoch Arden*, with "The Northern Farmer" (page 386); in 1875, *Queen Mary*, followed by half a dozen other plays; in 1880, *Ballads and Other Poems*, including "The Revenge" (page 391), "Rizpah" (page 394), etc.; in 1885 and after, several volumes, containing some of his finest work, the mature fruit of long experience, such as "To Virgil" (page 396) and "Crossing the Bar" (page 403).

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

In this, his first venture into the great realm of Arthurian legend, Tennyson made use (if a statement by Palgrave may

be trusted) of an Italian romance concerning the Donna di Scalotta. This may have suggested "Shalott" in place of "Astolat," the form used in Sir Thomas Malory's version of the story of Elaine (*Morte d'Arthur*, Book XVIII, chapters 9-20) and later by Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King*. The reader will find it profitable to study the present poem in conjunction with Malory's version and Tennyson's "Lancelot and Elaine." Here the treatment is pictorial and mystical. The key to the allegory, according to Tennyson's son, is to be found in lines 69-72. Canon Ainger reported the following explanation by Tennyson himself: "The new-born love for something, for some one, in the wide world from which she has been so long secluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities."

(301.) 3. *wold*: a tract of open, rolling land.

5. *Camelot*: the legendary capital city of King Arthur, commonly placed in Cornwall, southwestern England.

76. *brazen greaves*: the knight's armor below the knee.

(302.) 80. *yellow field*: Cf. lines 2-3.

84. *the golden Galaxy*: the Milky Way.

87. *blazoned baldrick*: a belt worn over the shoulder and across the body and bearing heraldic emblems.

143. *They* — — — *song*: Cf. line 30.

THE LOTOS-EATERS

A mood of languorous and sensuous delight, retiring from the energetic and complex life of the time in which he found himself, was a tendency of the young Tennyson. He set himself to control it, in the service of a high moral and artistic purpose; see his "Palace of Art," and the comments upon it in the *Memoir* by his son, Vol. I, pages 118-121. But the mood provides much of the charm of his early poetry: e.g., "The Lady of Shalott" (page 301), "Enone" (page 306), "Mariana," "A Dream of Fair Women," and above all, the present poem. Here the mood is most fully grasped and put into verse. The poet's choice of subject-matter was felici-

tous. The narrative element of the poem goes back to Homer's *Odyssey*, IX, 83-97 (see Butcher and Lang's or any other translation), beginning "On the tenth day we set foot on the land of the lotos-eaters." Revising the poem for the edition of 1842 (it first appeared in 1833), Tennyson introduced a passage—stanza VI of the Choric Song—in which the Greeks surmise the troubled state of affairs in their island-home Ithaca, the "confusion in the little isle," to which they have now grown languidly indifferent. He thus heightened the contrast between the sweet seductions of the sense-life and the human responsibilities of a life lived among men, and so deepened the spiritual undercurrent of the theme. But the poem as a whole is a chant of delight in a rich and indolent life of the senses. Brooding on Homer's plain account of what happened to the followers of Ulysses, Tennyson sought to make real, through his finely selective imagination, the heavy contentment of the lotos-eaters and the dreamy beauty of the land to which they have come. Toward the attainment of this purpose, he derived valuable suggestions from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (the description of the Idle Lake, in particular, Book II, Canto Sixth) and from Thomson's "Castle of Indolence."

A comparison of this poem with Keats's chief odes and "The Eve of St. Agnes," written a dozen years earlier and at about the same age, will bring out the relationship and also the marked difference between Tennyson's style and that of his predecessor.

(303.) 35. *deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake*: in a deep languor, yet with senses alive to beauty.—Contrast "the wakeful anguish" of Keats's "Ode on Melancholy" (page 252).

38. *Between the sun and moon*: The phrase recalls the whole picture of the three opening stanzas, since the tone of that picture was largely given by these opposite lights; see lines 7, 12, 14, 17, 19, 26.

(305.) 133. *amaranth and moly*: *Amaranth* means in Greek "unfading." *Moly* is a plant described in the *Odyssey* as being black at the root but having a flower like

milk: "moly the gods call it, but it is hard for mortal men to dig."

(305.) 142. *acanthus-wreath divine*: Acantha was a nymph loved by Apollo, and changed into the flower acanthus.

CENONE

Deriving his materials from various sources, Tennyson in this poem retells a famous Greek myth in his modern way, putting into it his own thought and providing a setting elaborated with his usual meticulous art. The myth is the story of the judgment of Paris, here narrated from the point of view of CEnone.

A son of Priam, king of Troy, the infant Paris was exposed on Mount Ida, but was brought up by a shepherd. He married CEnone, daughter of a river-god. Their fates, however, were severed through the part that he played in the quarrel concerning the golden apple. The myth tells that, when Peleus and Thetis were wedded, all the gods were invited with the exception of Eris, or Strife; who, enraged, cast among the guests a golden apple (Tennyson's "fruit of pure Hesperian gold," the Hesperides being the guardians of the apples) which bore the inscription "For the fairest." Hera, Pallas Athena, and Aphrodite each claimed it. To settle the dispute, Zeus bade the contestants betake themselves to Mount Ida and assert their claims before Paris. Hera offers the shepherd vast power; Pallas, wisdom and law ("Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control"); Aphrodite, the fairest of women to be his wife. Accepting the last bribe, the shepherd in consequence deserts the nymph CEnone, who, filled with her own woe, senses prophetically the dread events that will issue from the decision of Paris,—the long war and the doom of great Troy.—In a later poem, "The Death of CEnone," Tennyson concludes her story.

(306.) 10. *Gargarus*: the loftiest peak of Ida, whence, according to Homer, the gods watched the battles in the plains of Troy.

39-40. *yonder walls* — — — *slowly breathed*: Apollo, it is said, raised the walls of Troy with the music of his lyre.

51. *Simois*: a stream rising in Mt. Ida.

(307.) 72. *oread*: a mountain-nymph, such as CEnone.

81. *light-foot Iris*: messenger of the gods in the *Iliad* (in the *Odyssey*, it is Hermes).

102. *peacock*: the bird sacred to Hera (Juno) who is introduced in the ensuing lines.

(308.) 162-164. *the full-grown will* — — — *perfect freedom*: until the will, full-grown and rounded out by experience, shall, as pure law, coincide with the perfect kind of freedom.—Pallas' speech is a noble expression of Tennyson's sense of the inner law; cf. lines 145-146.

170-171. *Idalian Aphrodite* — — — *Paphian wells*: Aphrodite (Venus) was said to have sprung from the foam of the sea. She was worshipped especially at Idalium and Paphos in Cyprus.

175-178. *From the violets* etc.: Observe how the poet here recalls, for the sake of Venus, the noontide lights, flowers, and vines of the "bower" (see lines 90-100).

(309.) 204. *They came* — — — *tallest pines*: apparently the ship-builders, cutting the timber for the ship in which Paris sailed to Sparta.

220. *The Abominable*: Eris.

(310.) 259. *Cassandra*: Priam's daughter, who foretold the fall of Troy.

LOVE THOU THY LAND

See the note on Disraeli's "Wellington," page 716, above.—This poem gives the political and social aspect of the type of character described in the preceding poem, lines 142-164.

11-12. *wild hearts* — — — *can lime*: The people are extravagant in desire and feeble in accomplishment, easily led and betrayed by the sophist, like birds ensnared with lime.

20-24. *Watch what main-currents* etc.: When you have clearly discerned a movement that is soundly progressive, try to stop the growth of prejudices that oppose it. But use no bitter words, remembering that gentleness itself is an advance

of civilization; and that those who are weaker in discernment than you, may be, as persons, equally valuable (with "thy peers" compare line 8).

(310.) 34. *With life that, working strongly, binds:* The law that has been long and fully discussed, by many persons of different minds and interests (lines 35-36), will have won a vitality that will ensure its being obeyed.

(311.) 67-68. *Regard gradation — — — rising wind:* Consider the many and successive "changes" (line 65) necessary before there can arise a new social state ("the second whole") that will be *harmonious*. Otherwise, the "rising wind" of progress will be ridden by the fury Discord.

69. *idol-fires:* the various schemes of progress worshipped in the nineteenth century; cf. lines 59-64.

ULYSSES

The substance of this poem was primarily suggested by a passage in Dante's *Inferno*, XXVI, 90-142, which the reader should consult (translations by Carey, C. E. Norton, Henry Johnson). Tennyson follows the medieval legend quite closely; but his conception of the character of Ulysses is partly Dante's, partly Homer's, partly his own. Much of the feeling that animates the words of Ulysses is unmistakably modern. It should be noted that the central idea embodied in the poem is quite the opposite of that in Tennyson's other Ulysses poem, "The Lotos-Eaters" (page 303).

In the choice of scene, Tennyson departs from Dante and follows Homer, representing Ulysses as having returned to the "barren crags" of his island-home Ithaca, after the many long years of the Trojan War and of his subsequent wanderings. Here he is "matched with an aged wife," Penelope, and out of sympathy with the "savage race" over whom he reigns as "an idle king." But to be idle is hateful: he must respond to the active life within, urging strength of will and a quest of fuller experience. Tennyson enlarges, with something of romantic longing, the saying

of Dante's Ulysses: "Consider your origin; ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge." At the end of the quest is the "eternal silence" to which the pagan mind looked forward stoically; or, it may be (though the hope never rises to faith), a new life in the Happy Isles fabled to lie beyond the Pillars of Hercules (the strait of Gibraltar), the dwelling-place of great departed spirits like Achilles.

3. *mete:* measure out.

4. *unequal:* above their capacity, and therefore to be "doled" out to them; cf. lines 35-38.

10. *rainy Hyades:* a group of stars anciently associated with wet weather.

11. *I am become a man:* I am nothing, now, except the honor that came to me in travel (line 15) and battle (line 16).

18-21. *I am a part of all etc.:* Ulysses has entered so keenly (lines 7-8) into all his varied experiences that he still lives and moves in them; yet not as in a dwelling where he could happily "make an end" (line 22): for they all converge into a single, endless archway stretching ahead. (312.) 50. *Old age hath yet etc.:* Contrast "The Lotos-Eaters," lines 51-53.

TITHONUS

According to myth, Tithonus, a mortal, beautiful in his youth, was beloved of Eos, goddess of the dawn, at whose request he was made immortal, like herself. Eos, however, had not besought the gods to endow him with perpetual youth and vigor; accordingly, though immortal, he slowly wasted away to a decrepit old age from which death could not release him. (Eventually, he was transformed into a grasshopper.)

The great though quiet power of the poem in which Tennyson has interpreted this myth, comes from his grasp of two old aims of the heart: one of them youthful, mystic, and intense (lines 50-63), the other more mature and more truly human (lines 64-76).—Have any previous poems in this book something of the same general idea?

(313.) 18. *Hours*: Horæ, goddesses of the seasons.

25. *the silver star, thy guide*: the morning-star.

49. "*The gods*" etc.: probably not a specific quotation, but an epigrammatic rendering of a prevalent Greek thought.

62-63. *Like that strange song* — — — *rose into towers*: See note to page 306, lines 39-40, above.

(314.) 76. *silver wheels*: Eos is generally represented as coming in a chariot.

LOCKSLEY HALL

Beneath the thin fiction, this poem expresses much of Tennyson's own moods and of his reflection upon the activities of his age, sometimes with fine poetic power.

3. *curlews*: game birds, of the snipe family.

4. *Dreary gleams* — — — *flying*: gleams of light among hurrying clouds or mists; "flying" is used absolutely. This prepares for the storm at the close (line 191).

9. *the Pleiads*: a group ("swarm") of stars, six of them plainly visible, hundreds of others not definitely distinguishable (probably the "silver braid" of line 10).

12. *the fairy-tales of science*: the wonderful discoveries and prospects of science. Particulars are mentioned in line 186.

(316.) 75. *comfort scorned of devils*: alluding to "Paradise Lost," Books First and Second.

75-76. *the poet sings* etc.: Dante, "Inferno," V, 121-123: "There is no greater grief than to remember a happy time in misery."

79-80. *Like a dog* etc.: Cf. lines 49-50.

107. *that earlier page*: See lines 11-16.

(317.) 121-124. *Saw the heavens* etc.: Long before Tennyson's time, the balloon had suggested man's eventual conquest of the air. Shelley, in "Prometheus Unbound," Act Fourth, line 421 (page 199), is vaguely prophetic. Tennyson's prediction is explicit and vivid.

126. *through the thunder-storm*: What relation does this bear to "in the central blue" (line 124)?

130. *And the kindly* — — — *universal law*: The earth will rest from battle, for men shall be bound ("lapt") by human law, as external nature is by hers. The word "kindly" has here its old meaning of "natural," i.e., in accord with the law of *one's own kind*; cf. line 29, and context, in the preceding poem.

135-136. *Slowly comes a hungry people* etc.: intended as a contrast to lines 127-128. — See the note, above, to Hood's "Song of the Shirt" (page 709), a poem written soon after the present one. In 1843 also appeared Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present*, attacking the doctrine of "laissez-faire," and urging active help and guidance for the working-class; see particularly the powerful chapter on "Democracy." Carlyle and others were inveighing against the Corn Laws (finally abolished in 1846), which kept up the price of bread. Earlier, the so-called Corn-Law Rhymer, Ebenezer Elliott (1781-1849) had been producing verse a sample of which is the following, entitled "Spenserian"—a grimly ironic use of the Spenserian stanza, usually employed in the realms of romance:—

"I saw a horrid thing of many names,
And many shapes. Some called it wealth,
some power,
Some grandeur. From its heart it shot
black flames,
That scorched the souls of millions, hour
by hour;
And its proud eyes rained everywhere a
shower
Of hopeless life, and helpless misery;
For, spoused to fraud, destruction was its
dower!
But its cold brightness could not hide from
me
The parent base of crime, the nurse of
poverty!"

138. *the process of the suns*: the passage of time.

141. *Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers*: Cf. "Love Thou Thy Land," lines 17-20 (page 310).

153. *Here* — — — *nothing*: At least

in England, where nature is cold and decadent, woman's passion is nothing as compared with mine (the completion of the idea comes in lines 167-168).—The ensuing description of tropic scenery expresses that poetic yearning for a richer climate which entered into the mood of "The Lotos-Eaters" (page 310).

(318.) 173. *again the dream*: His visionary marriage with "some savage woman" (line 168) reminds him of his former romantic fancies.

180. *like Joshua's moon in Ajalon*: See *Joshua*, X, 12-13.

182. *Let the great world — — — grooves of change*: Tennyson explained that when he went by the first train from Liverpool to Manchester, in 1830, he supposed "that the wheels ran in a groove." Hence the image in this line.—Throughout the nineteenth century the idea of change pervades men's thoughts, impulsively in the era inaugurated by the French Revolution, more soberly in the Victorian age. In Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" period, the enthusiasm for "progress" was feeding optimistically upon the doctrine of evolution as set forth by Darwin's predecessors.

182. *great world*: Tennyson originally wrote "peoples."

183. *Through the shadow* etc.: Our Western civilization is moving from the old darkness to the new light.

184. *Europe — — — Cathay*: Europe stands for change or progress, Cathay (China) for a static or stagnant condition.

185. *Mother-Age* etc.: "mine" refers to his own dead mother (see line 156). Instead of her, he addresses the Time-Spirit (*Zeitgeist*), which has fostered him like a mother.

186. *weigh the sun*: alluding, doubtless, to experiments conducted by Francis Baily about this time.

SIR GALAHAD

This poem has a graver, deeper note than may be found in Tennyson's early Arthurian poem "The Lady of Shalott" (page 301). It is a character portrait of the valiant, chaste, saintly hero of the Holy

Grail, whose story is told by Malory in Books XI-XVII and by Tennyson in one of the finest of his *Idylls*, "The Holy Grail," both of which (or at least the latter) should be read in conjunction with the present poem. The Holy Grail itself is the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper, and in which Joseph of Arimathea was said to have caught His blood at the crucifixion; it was afterwards conveyed, in one account, to Britain. The quest of the Grail became the ideal of many knights, but it was visible only to the pure in heart—only, in fact, to the "virgin heart" of the knight Galahad. In the idyl of "The Holy Grail" Tennyson represents King Arthur as deploring the quest: "ye follow wandering fires." "But I," cries Galahad in high rapture,

"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—
'O Galahad,' and 'O Galahad, follow me.'"

This ringing ecstasy reveals a mystic reach in Tennyson himself far exceeding that of his own early work, and the work of his early master Keats.

Galahad's temper is conveyed partly in the persistent beat of the tetrameter. But, for variety, in each stanza lines 2, 4, and 8 are shortened; and line 11 has an internal instead of an end rhyme.

(319.) 1. *casques*: helmets.

18. *crypt*: here, the basement of a church, or other ecclesiastical building, used as a chapel.

25. *the stormy crescent*: the cloudy moon.

51. *The cock crows* etc.: An old belief was that on Christmas Eve "the bird of dawning singeth all night long" (*Hamlet*, I, i, 160).

53. *the leads*: lead-covered roofs.

70-72. *This mortal* etc.: For an account of Tennyson's own trance experiences, see the Memoir by his son, I, 320, and II, 473.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

A sorrower may feel in life a cold, throbbing force—beyond life's simple joys

and labors, and stately aims. These, too, he perceives; but they intensify in him, by contrast, the sense of what he has lost. — The occasion of the poem was the death of Arthur Hallam, whose body was then lying at Clevedon by the sea.

(320.) 1. *Break, — break, — break, — :* The line is to be read with pauses to compensate for the omitted unstressed syllables.

Songs from THE PRINCESS

Beginning with the publication in 1792 of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, the rights and functions of women were widely discussed. Tennyson, sensitive to all the problems of his age, turned to this subject in *The Princess*. No impetuous reformer, he avoided the excesses of those who regarded the question from a political and economic point of view, emphasizing, instead, the right of women to participation in the cultural heritage of the race — their right to education. Some years after the publication of *The Princess*, women's colleges were founded at both Cambridge and Oxford; Oxford has recently (1920) opened all her privileges to women students, without reservation. In general, Tennyson claimed for woman every opportunity to develop "All that not harms distinctive womanhood," i.e., all that is not injurious to woman as lover, wife, and mother. It was to emphasize this latter aspect of the problem that he added, in the third edition, the half dozen songs between the cantos.

SWEET AND LOW

6. *the dying moon*: the setting moon — which, in line 15, is paling in the dawn.

THE SPLENDOR FALLS

The sunset glory of the first stanza is recalled by a single word in each of the two following stanzas: what word?

9. *scaur*: (or "scar") bare rock.

NOW SLEEPS THE CRIMSON PETAL

(321.) 167. *Danaë*: a princess of Argos whom Zeus visited in the form of a golden shower.

IN MEMORIAM

Unlike "Lycidas" and "Adonais," Tennyson's great elegy is the expression of a profound personal loss: his affectionate admiration of Arthur Hallam was unbounded. "This temperate, eloquent, enthusiastic being came to Tennyson like a revelation of what he himself would be, but could not. Hallam had the constant high spirits which Tennyson rarely achieved, the large, lucid, and eager speech which was never his, the pioneering energy, the questing individuality to which he could not rouse himself; while in common they shared a reflective love of virtue, of great thoughts and of beautiful ideas not too curiously defined" (Fausset, *Tennyson: A Modern Portrait*, 1923). Hallam called forth all that was best in Tennyson, corroborating it and inciting to visions beyond; and when he died the poet was thrown back upon himself. For seventeen years he brooded over his memories, his grief, and the ultimate problems of life and death, — writing short poems (called "sections" in the notes, below) from time to time, rearranging them, revising them, till at length the series possessed a certain completeness and unity. The form of stanza that he used was one employed by Ben Jonson and Lord Herbert of Cherbury and generally forgotten; Tennyson made it his own, giving it a slow, grave music befitting his complex moods and solemn meditation.

In the following arbitrary plan, each subheading gives only the main topic running through the *group* of sections it follows, and several of the individual sections may have little or no bearing upon it. Compare the plan for "Adonais," page 691, above.

(1) BEFORE THE FIRST CHRISTMAS: THE PREOCCUPATION WITH SORROW.

I-VIII. Grief unrelieved.

IX-XIX. The calm and unrest of despair: the coming of the ship.

XX-XXVII. The lost companionship.

(2) FIRST CHRISTMAS AND AFTER: THE QUESTION OF IMMORTALITY.

XXVIII-XXXVII. The Christian faith in life after death.

XXXVIII-XLIX. The remoteness of the lost friend: speculations.

I-LIX. The ills of life and nature: faith dimmed.

LX-LXXI. The acceptance of separation: dreams.

LXXII-LXXVII. The quenched fame.

(3) SECOND CHRISTMAS AND AFTER: THE REVIVED INTEREST IN PRESENT LIVING.

LXXVIII-LXXXIX. Valuation of the lost friendship: renewed joy in nature.

XC-XCVIII. The question of present communion with the dead.

XCIX-CIII. Change and movement in the poet's life.

(4) THIRD CHRISTMAS AND AFTER: THE LARGER HUMANITY.

CIV-CVIII. A fresh sense of human society.

CIX-CXIV. Human values of the lost friend.

CXV-CXXIII (see also the epilogue). Time and development.

CXXIV-CXXXI (see also the proem). The living Love and Will.

PROEM. 7-8. *Thou madest Death* — — — *has made*: Thou hast made, and art triumphant over, Death.—See the next stanza.

9. *the dust*: in contrast with the high heavens implied in line 5.

25-26. *Let knowledge grow* — — — *in us dwell*: Cf. "Love Thou Thy Land," lines 17-20 (page 310).

32. *thy light*: knowledge (see line 23).—Throughout this stanza Tennyson has in mind the misuse of knowledge suggested in the preceding stanza. Compare the two stanzas with Wordsworth's "Desire we past illusions" (page 55).

33. *Forgive what seemed my sin in me*: The true nature of our sin (as of our worth, in the next line) is known only to God; our standards of merit are human. Cf. *Psalms*, cxliii, 2: "In thy sight shall no man living be justified."

I. 1. *him who sings*: "As far as I recollect I referred to Goethe" (Tennyson, in 1880).

8. *interest of tears*: profit earned by sorrow.

9. *Let Love* — — — *drowned*: The "victor Hours" (line 13) might submerge grief quickly by submerging love—and thus contradict the principle of the "stepping-stones": contrast the goals indicated in the first and last stanzas of this section.

II. 7. *the clock*: i.e., in the church-tower, shaded by, or behind, the yew-tree in the churchyard.

III. 3. *sweet and bitter in a breath*: These are fellows in Sorrow (line 1).

8. *dying sun*: Science supposes the sun to be gradually cooling. Therefore even the sun, the source of life, concurs with earth's deserts (line 7) in echoing the mourner's sense of waste and futility in nature.

V. 3. *nature*: i.e., the body and its laws.

VII. The function of the sea in "Break, Break" (page 320; note, page 722) is here performed by the sounds and sights given in the third stanza.

1. *house*: the house of Hallam's father in Wimpole Street, London.

IX. 1. *Fair ship* etc.: Hallam died suddenly in Vienna, on the Danube; a sailing vessel brought his body from the Mediterranean to the port of Dover, whence it was conveyed for burial in Clevedon Church, Somersetshire, overlooking the meeting of the Severn River and Bristol Channel, a few miles below the Wye (the river of "Tintern Abbey")—events and places repeatedly alluded to in subsequent sections.

10. *Phosphor*: Lucifer, the morning star.

13. *Sphere all your lights*: i.e., let them shine full-orbed and calm.

X. 15-16. *where the kneeling hamlet* — — — *grapes of God*: i.e., in the village church (where the congregation takes the wine of the Holy Communion).

XI. 5. *wold*: unwooded plain.

12. *bounding*: limiting.

XV. 11. *a plane of molten glass*: Cf. XII, 9.

XVI. 2. *calm despair and wild unrest*: See XI, 16; and XV, 15.

XVIII. 17-20. *That dies not* etc.: See note to I, 9, above.

XXIII. 22-24. *Argive heights . . . flute of Arcady*: used broadly for *Greek* philosophers and poets, beloved of Hallam and Tennyson in their days of intimate companionship.

XXIV. 3-4. *The very source* etc.: See note to III, 8, above.

XXVI. 11. *In more* etc.: in my advancing life, untrueness to my friend's memory.

XXVII. 15-16. *'Tis better* etc.: Cf. I, 15-16.

XXX. 21. *a higher range*: Probably this denotes both tone and idea.

22. *Once more we sang*: not with an impetuous sense of earthly companionship (as in lines 13-16) — for the thought of death as a sleep (lines 17-20) had stilled that mood; but with a sense that the dead, while not oblivious of our life, have yet a high kind of progressive activity that is beyond our understanding.

27. *flame*: spirit.

28. *from veil to veil*: piercing one mystery after another.

XXXI. 16. *that Evangelist*: St. John; see *John*, XI, 1-44. — "He," in the line before, refers to Lazarus.

XXXII. 1. *Her*: Mary's. — In the third stanza, Tennyson follows the view that the sister of Lazarus was the same as Mary Magdalene; see *John*, XI, 2, XII, 3.

XXXIII. 3. *has centre everywhere*: can find everywhere expressions or symbols of "the law within" (line 14) — instead of being entirely centred in "heaven" (line 6) and Jesus (line 11).

14. *the law within*: See "Eneide," lines 162-164, page 308, and the note.

XXXIV. The question of immortality revives the doubt which came upon the poet in the first darkness of his grief (III).

5-8. *This round of green* etc.: (Supply "is," from line 3, before "Fantastic beauty.") The beauty of earth and sun, if there were no spiritual truth behind it, would be merely fantastic, like that produced by the human imagination when it is strongly creative but superficial.

11. *Of things all mortal*: God himself would be a transitory thing to the

believer if he could have *no* experience, in his "own dim life," of a kind of life that is eternal (lines 1-2).

XXXV. 11. *æonian*: lasting for æons or ages.

18-24. *If Death were seen* etc.: The sense of eternity is a prerequisite — not just a result — of the growth of *human* love. If the human spirit had recognized death as absolute ruler, love would never have risen above the gregariousness and sensuality of nature.

XXXVI. Compare the idea of XXXIII.

5. *Wisdom*: i.e., God's wisdom.

7. *a tale*: i.e., the Gospel narrative.

XXXVII. 1. *Urania*: See note to "Adonais," line 12, page 691.

6. *thy Parnassus*: As the seat of Apollo and the Muses, Mount Parnassus is here used for the poetic art itself; "laurel," in the next line, for success in that art.

9. *my Melpomene*: his tragic Muse. Why "earthly" (line 13)?

23. *the master's field*: Cf. lines 2-4, 17-20.

XXXVIII. 2. *under altered skies*: lacking the companionship which lent charm to the landscape and (next stanza) to the seasons. See XXII, 1-8.

XXXIX. The sequel of II, III. Written in April, 1868.

3. *fruitful . . . smoke*: "The yew, when flowering, in a wind or if struck sends up its pollen like smoke" (Tennyson's note).

XLI. The sequel of XXX, lines 21-28.

15-16. *the gulfs* etc.: "The eternal miseries of the Inferno" (Tennyson).

23. *secular to-be*: "æons of the future" (Tennyson); "secular" in the sense of "pertaining to the progress of ages."

XLII. See the introductory note on "In Memoriam," page 723, above.

2. *still*: always.

5. *so may Place retain us still*: i.e., the unseen world may provide ideal "unity" (line 3), as well as ideal progress; see XXX, 27-28; XLI, 23-24.

XLIII. 6. *might it: it might.*

7-8. *And silent traces — — the flower:* Quiet recollection of its life on earth might be the only activity of the departed soul, during its "intervital gloom" (line 3).

15. *prime: dawn.* — Tennyson's idea here is analogous to the Christian doctrine of a general resurrection on the last day. See, for example, *First Thessalonians*, IV, 13-18.

XLIV. 4. *the doorways of his head:* "The dead after this life may have no remembrance of life, like the living babe who forgets the time before the sutures of the skull are closed; yet the living babe grows in knowledge, and though the remembrance of his earliest days has vanished, yet with his increasing knowledge there comes a dreamy vision of what has been; it may be so with the dead; if so, resolve my doubts, etc." (Tennyson's note).

6. *the hoarding sense:* the memory, hoarding sense impressions.

8. *A little flash, a mystic hint:* Cf. Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," stanza IX (page 42).

XLV. 10. *clear memory:* Contrast the "mystic hint" and "dim touch" in the preceding section (lines 8, 11). The idea of the present section is that the departed soul, unlike the infant soul, may have a clear memory of its past, since such memory belongs to a developed personality.

XLVI. 4. *Lest life etc.:* Lest the vital energy so essential to our development should be sapped by brooding memory.

5-8. *there, no shade etc.:* In eternity, since the past will not be "shadowed" (line 3) by the present, the whole life that the soul led on earth shall be seen in true perspective, and its eternal meaning (line 8) be clear.

12. *those five years:* Cf. XXII, I-12.

13-15. *O Love etc.:* From the standpoint of eternity, the earthly intercourse of the two friends would be seen as very small, in scope and in duration. But its significance, as an expression of the eternal power of Love, would be seen as lofty and all-embracing.

XLVII. 12. *at least:* in contrast with "vaster" (line 11) and "endless" (line 9).

14. *fade away:* i.e., into "the general soul" (line 4).

L. 14. *To point the term:* to point out the terminus or boundary.

LI. 10. *Shall love etc.:* Shall I question my friend's love, lacking faith in him?

LII. 11-12. *Not the sinless years etc.:* Not the record of the sinless life of Jesus.

LIII. 5. *give: yield.*

10. *For life etc.:* in the case of those who have succeeded in outliving their youthful passions.

12. *those that eddy etc.:* giddy youths, living without law.

LV. This and the next section show the mood of III and XXXV strengthened by broodings upon all that is inhuman in nature, and widened by application to human life as a whole. For a similar mood in Keats, see the "Epistle to Reynolds" (page 238).

1. *the living whole:* Cf. the preceding section, line 8.

7. *type: species.*

15-16. *the great world's altar-stairs — — up to God:* the immemorial and widespread institution of prayer, our recourse in hours of trial — leading us, through trial, toward the divine. The suggestion may be that the world has built up those "altar-stairs" gradually, under the urge of troubles and ignorance.

LVI. 2. *scarpèd:* cut (by man or nature) perpendicularly. — Tennyson refers, in this stanza, to the fossil remains of extinct species.

13-16. *Who trusted God was love etc.:* This stanza repeats in condensed form the thought of the first three stanzas of the preceding section.

16. *ravine: rapacity.* (A more common form is *ravin*; both forms are pronounced: ra'vin.)

22. *Dragons of the prime:* the strange, huge animals of prehistoric ages.

23. *tare: tore.*

26. *O for thy voice:* i.e., Hal-lam's. Cf. L, lines 9-12.

LVII. 15-16. *Ave — — evermore:*

Tennyson has in mind Catullus's "Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale" (And forever, brother, hail and farewell), concerning which he wrote: "Nor can any modern elegy, so long as men retain the least hope in the after-life of those whom they loved, equal in pathos the desolation of that everlasting farewell."

LIX. Compare XLVIII. But the mood here is still lighter.

1. *wilt thou*: if thou wilt.

13-16. *And set thee forth* etc.:

In his moods of relaxation the poet will write so fancifully that some future readers will consider his sorrow unreal.

LXI. Compare XLIV.

12. *The soul of Shakespeare*:

See lines 3, 4.

LXVIII. 8. *Reveillée*: commonly pronounced, in England, with the accent on the second syllable.

LXX. 7. *pallèd*: wrapped in palls or mantles.

LXXII. On the anniversary of Hallam's death.

6. *reverse of doom*: the death of Hallam, a sudden turn of fate.

LXXIII. 14-16. *while the soul* etc.: The "general Soul" (as in XLVII, 4) — or possibly the soul within the poet — preserves and uses the power for good that was in Hallam.

LXXIV. 11-12. *knowing Death* — — — *beautiful with thee*: Cf. Shakespeare's verse "Makes black night beauteous and her old face new" (*Sonnets*, xxvii, 12).

LXXV. 15-20. *The world* etc.: Cf. the last stanza of LXXIII.

LXXVI. 3-4. *Where all* — — — *needle's end*: "so distant in void space that all our firmament would appear to be a needle-point thence" (Tennyson).

6. *secular abyss*: gulf of the ages; cf. XLI, 23.

LXXVIII. The difference in mood between this section and XXX appears finely in the descriptive details of the first three stanzas.

5. *yule-clog*: yule-log.

18. *this mystic frame*: the mysterious human constitution; the phrase is repeated from XXXVI, 2.

LXXIX. 1. "*More than my brothers*" etc.: This is the last verse of IX.

2. *thee*: Tennyson's brother

Charles.

LXXX. 8. *stayed*: securely fixed.

16. *reach*: shall reach.

LXXXII. This is the sequel of LXXIII.

5-6. *Eternal process* etc.: Cf. XXX, 25-28.

7. *these*: referring to the forms produced by decay of the body (lines 3-4).

8. *one*: a spirit.

LXXXIV. 11. *one*: Tennyson's sister Emily, betrothed to Hallam.

LXXXV. Addressed to Edmund Lushington, an "Apostle" at Cambridge, later a distinguished scholar.

1-4. *This truth* etc.: Cf. the last stanza of XXVII.

26. *the fountain fresh*: the Truth itself, at its very source.

33. *friendship, equal-poised control*: the mutual control of sympathetic natures. Cf. LXXIX, 19-20.

37-40. *Yet none* etc.: Cf. IV, 15-16.

53-56. *the imaginative woe* etc.: The matter of art is remembered experience, which the artist reshapes in a higher, impersonal form. Hence, in turning his trouble into verse, the poet broke the force of his personal grief — but at the same time established it for good in his heart and imagination. Cf. line 69 ff.

98. *these things*: the symbols and fancies providing an unreal communion with his dead friend (lines 93-96). Supply "namely" at the beginning of this line.

LXXXVI. This poem is the sequel of LXXXIII. Like the west wind that it addresses, it sweeps through all nature, from the sunset clouds toward the eastern star. The effect of nature here is just the contrary of that rendered in LV-LVI.

1. *ambrosial*: delicious; here, in respect of the odors carried by the wind from wet flowers and woods, doubtless in springtime: cf. lines 3-4, 6, 10, 14.

5. *rapt*: hurried along.

7. *hornèd*: winding, as in Virgil's "corniger fluvius" (*Æneid*, VIII, 77).

LXXXVII. 40. *The bar of Michael Angelo*: The portrait of the great artist shows a marked ridge over the eye-brows.

LXXXVIII. Addressed to the nightingale; and in a mood akin to that of LXXXVI. The poet senses a central but obscure joy running through nature, into which all other feelings may blend. He himself cannot clasp that deep joy; but it seems related to the beauty of the universe conceived as a whole, and this sometimes flashes, for a moment, through his imagination.

2. *quicks*: live hedges, and thickets.

11-12. *The glory — — and go*: Compare the idea of LIV, 1-12.

LXXXIX. 1. *counterchange*: chequer.

14. *ambrosial*: See note to LXXXVI, 1, above.

41. *gloss*: smooth down.

47-48. *Before the crimson-circled star* etc.: "before Venus, the evening star, had dipt into the sunset. The planets, according to Laplace, were evolved from the sun" (Tennyson).

XCI. 4. *the sea-blue bird*: the kingfisher.

5-6. *the form by which I know* etc.: the only form that I know, i.e., Hallam as a young man among his contemporaries.

15. *after form*: the spiritual and *maturer* form (accordant with the summer season, line 9) which Hallam has attained in eternity. — Tennyson's belief in the *progressive* life of the dead has been indicated in a number of passages beginning with XXX, 22-28.

XCII. After yearning in XCI for a vision of his friend, the poet in XCII concluded that such a vision might well be a doubtful "likeness" proceeding from his own mind. In the present section he understands clearly that he "shall not see" his friend (line 1), since a "visual shade" (line 5) cannot truly convey a "sightless," i.e. invisible, life (line 9). But in the depths of the spirit, he thinks, real contact with the departed may occur.

15. *this blindness of the frame*: See LXXVIII, 18, and the note.

XCv. The peaceful scene of lines 1-20 suggests the peace of spirit which in the preceding section was described as prerequisite for communion with the dead.

8. *fluttering urn*: tea-urn over a spirit-lamp.

10. *lit the filmy shapes*: night-moths alighted.

38. *empyreal*: See the note to page 18, line 787, above.

41. *Æonian*: See note to XXXV, 11, above.

46. *matter-moulded*: shaped by sense-perceptions. (E.g., the word "spirit" comes originally from the act of breathing, as Tennyson indicates in LVI, 7; Emerson in the chapter on "Language" in *Nature* gives many examples.)

47-48. *for intellect to reach Through memory* etc.: for me to recall and think intelligently about the state of my spirit at that time.

XCVI. Compare XXXIII.

1. *You*: a woman of simple faith.

5. *one*: Hallam.

22-24. *As over Sinai's peaks* etc.: Cf. *Exodus*, xix, especially verse 16: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud." Tennyson has in mind a contrast between conventional religion (symbolized by the Israelite "gods of gold," line 23) and the deeper faith of one like Moses, who perceives the divine Presence in the dark cloud. This is a concrete presentation of the idea in lines 11-12.

XCIX. Contrast the mood of LXXII.

5. *thy darkling red*: The context shows that the weather is showery but mild.

CII. 23. *They*: the "Poor rivals" of line 19.

CIII. For the central idea of the allegory, see the first stanza of I (page 322).

6. *maidens*: "They are the Muses, poetry, arts — all that made life beautiful here, which we hope will pass with us beyond the grave" (Tennyson). See lines 45-52.

7. *hidden summits*: "the divine" (Tennyson).

8. *river*: "life" (Tennyson).

CIII. 16. *sea*: "eternity" (Tennyson).

25. *as vaster grew the shore*: "the progress of the Age" (Tennyson).

31. *Anakim*: a gigantic race dwelling in the south of Canaan (*Deuteronomy*, IX, 2).

33-36. *the death of war* etc.: "the great hopes of humanity and science" (Tennyson).

CIV. 8. *the bells I know*: See XXVIII, especially the last stanza.

CV. 4. *And strangely* etc.: Cf. LXXVIII, 4; XXX, 4.

9-12. *No more* etc.: This stanza alludes to XXIX; XXX, 1-8.

27-28. *Run out — — — in good*: "Fulfill your appointed revolutions, and bring the closing period 'rich in good'" (Tennyson's son). — This idea leads to the ringing New Year's Eve song which follows.

CVI. 19-20. *Ring out — — — fuller minstrel in*: Cf. CIII, 9-36.

32. *the Christ that is to be*: Cf. the poem, lines 1, 13-16.

CVII. Contrast the moods of XCIX and LXXII.

9-10. *And bristles — — — hard crescent*: and makes the thickets and hawthorns bristle toward (i.e., in the light of) the clear, frosty moon.

13-15. *the drifts — — — the coast*: Showers of snow, driven along by the wind, darken the foamy waves (white in the moonlight) as they break irregularly on the shore.

23. *whate'er he be*: The speculation on this point which ran through so many of the previous sections is here dismissed; see the next section.

CVIII. 5-6. *barren faith, And vacant yearning*: belief in the continued life of the dead, and yearning for reunion with them — in so far as such belief and yearning are devoid of good effect upon one's conduct in this present life.

6. *though with might*: even though they could be strong enough.

7. *To scale . . . height*: Cf. XCV, 35-43.

12. *The reflex of a human face*: the reflection of our human way of

looking at things; cf. note on XCIII, above.

CIX. Compare LXXXV, 45-48; LXXXVII, 29-40. — Why does the poet depart from the resolution he took in LXXV?

9-12. *High nature* etc.: Cf. XXIII, 17-20.

CX. 2. *rathe*: young.

7. *the serpent at thy side*: the envious person, in thy presence.

12. *he knew not why*: explained by line 16.

19-20. *And, born of love — — — imitative will*: Cf. the last stanza of the preceding section.

CXI. 3. *a golden ball*: the mound (from French "*monde*"); a figure of the globe, held in a sovereign's hand as emblem of authority. — In any rank of society, even the highest, a man may be a churl or clown at heart.

7. *coltish nature*: i.e., spiritually ungentle and undisciplined — though usually he can keep within the outward "forms" (line 6) or "gilded pale" (line 8) of gentlemanliness; "pale" means "enclosure."

19. *drew in*: contracted (by such passions).

CXII. 1. *High wisdom*: used ironically: a person who prides himself on his sound discernment.

2-4. *That I, who gaze* etc.: "High wisdom" has been twitting the poet that, although he gazes with calm and indulgent eyes on unaccomplished greatness, yet he makes light of narrower natures more perfect in their own small way" (Tennyson's son). To the worldly mind, he seems to prefer large promise (like that of Hallam) to relatively small but certain achievement.

8. *lesser lords of doom*: smaller men; "those that have free will, but less intellect" (Tennyson). Cf. line 4.

9-16. *For what wert thou?* etc.: The poet justifies his lofty estimate of Hallam by showing that his friend was not only highly endowed with power (lines 9-12), but that he was also making that power constantly more effectual, through

self-control (line 14) and ordered thinking (lines 15-16).

CXII. 15. *world-wide fluctuation*: unstable opinions that sweep through the world. — The idea of this stanza seems to be that Hallam, as he could rise above the turmoil in his own urgent spirit, could see beyond the turmoil of nineteenth-century political and social experiment. His political insight and strength are treated in the next section.

CXIV. Compare the poem, lines 25-32.

8. *Submitting all things to desire*: By removing, without replacing, the beliefs and conventions which formerly controlled men's desires, — and by pointing to the unknown future in which any wish may be fulfilled (line 7), — she makes "desire" the arbiter. This is the "fire" that sits "on her forehead" (line 5). In this section, Tennyson has particularly in mind the desire for power (lines 15, 26).

10. *She cannot . . . of death*: No doubt the poet cites this as a very obvious and popular distinction (not as the *deepest* distinction) between knowledge and wisdom.

12-13. *some wild Pallas . . . Of demons*: a debasement of the myth that Pallas Athena (Minerva), goddess of wisdom, sprang at birth from the head of Zeus (Jupiter).

26-28. *Who grewest not alone in power* etc.: Cf. CXII, 9-16. — By naming "reverence" and "charity" here, where logic would require "Wisdom," the poet strongly suggests that wisdom is inseparable from them, and is a spiritual more than a mental quality (cf. lines 21-22). Previously it was suggested that with true wisdom belong "love and faith" (line 11).

CXV. This and the next section concern the third and last springtime in "In Memoriam." Contrast the poet's feeling toward spring in XXXVIII-XXXIX.

2-3. *Now burgeons . . . flowering squares*: Every tangled hedge around the flowering fields is putting forth buds.

4. *ashen roots*: roots of ash trees.

8. *sightless*: invisible.

17-20. *and in my breast* etc.: Cf. the last stanza of LXXXIII.

CXVI. 4. *crescent prime*: growing spring.

13-16. *Yet less of sorrow* etc.: This state of mind was prepared for in the allegory of the veiled statue and the "great ship" in CIII, 12 ff., 40 ff.

CXVII. 9-11. *For every grain* etc.: These three lines allude to the hour-glass, sun-dial, and clock; and thus they prepare for the opening verse of the next section.

CXVIII. The life of the human spirit, including its sense of immortality, is not to be imaged as a surface product of the aged and cooled Earth (lines 4, 7-9, 20; cf. XXXV, 12, and LVI, 19); but as a strong metal newly dug from the mysterious centre of the universe, and then made molten hot, and roughly shaped, by the human struggle (lines 21-25). Human evolution is thus different from the evolution of the Earth and her lower creatures. Their nature, however, was mingled in ours, and must be "worked out" by human effort (lines 25-28; cf. LVI, 13-18).

4. *earth and lime*: inorganic constituents of the human body.

7. *They say*: What follows is a poetic presentation of the nebular hypothesis, which Laplace had set forth early in the century.

10. *seeming-random*: Why "seeming," here and in the next line?

11. *cyclic storms*: periodical cataclysms.

15. *in higher place*: beyond death.

16-17. *If so he type . . . more to more*: if he thus more and more spiritually interpret the process of development going on in nature. — Lines 1-17 are concerned with the *interpretation*, lines 18-28 with the *conduct*, of life as viewed from the standpoint of development.

CXIX. Prepared for by CXVI, lines 9-16. — Contrast VII, in idea and detail.

6. *black fronts long-withdrawn*: The fronts of the houses had long been quite obscured; but now, as the next line suggests, they are marked off by the early dawn's pale gleam on the street.

CXX. 2-3. *wholly brain, Magnet mockeries*: mechanisms moved, through the agency of nerves and brain, by the magnetic

force that governs the external world and that mocks our spiritual aims.

CXX. 3-4. *not in vain* — — — with *Death*: St. Paul's fight with beasts in the arena was productive of intenser faith and a nearer sense of eternity. See *First Corinthians*, xv, 32, and context.

6-8. *Let Science* etc.: If Science should restrict herself to the mechanistic theory of life, she would put herself outside the sphere of proper human interests. — The Darwinian theory of biologic evolution, elaborated in the *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859), was strongly current in the middle nineteenth century. In contrast to the view of Lamarck (1744-1829), it attributed organic development entirely to the mechanical processes of environment and heredity. During the past fifty years, however, Darwin's explanation of the fact of evolution has been seriously questioned by further biological investigation. Of the three factors in the process, Organism, Function, Environment, the last was stressed by the Darwinian school; the importance of the others has been insisted upon by more recent biologists. "Natural selection" has been compelled to give up "its former supremacy as the supposed sole determinant among practically indefinite possibilities of structure and function, for the more modest position of simply accelerating, retarding, or terminating the process of otherwise determined change. . . . Instead of guiding the ramifications of the tree of life, it would, in Mivart's excellent phrase, do little more than apply the pruning-knife to them" (Geddes and Thomson, *Evolution*). — Tennyson's dissatisfaction with a mechanistic explanation of life has been abundantly repeated in the experience of distinguished biologists in our own time; consult, for example, J. S. Haldane, *Life, Mechanism, and Personality*, second edition, 1921.

9-12. *Let him* etc.: Cf. the last stanza of CXVIII.

CXXI. 1. *Hesper*: Called Hesperus or the evening-star when it follows the sun; Phosphorus or the morning-star when it precedes him (lines 9, 17).

8. *And life* etc.: Sleep comes on.

19. *like my present and my past*: The poet has passed from the evening twilight of loss and sorrow (first stanza) to a sense of new life and a larger outlook (third stanza).

CXXII. Alludes to the working of the poet's mystic imagination during the earlier stages of his grief — and particularly to the experience recorded in XCV, 21-44.

11. *And enter in at breast and brow*: Cf. XCIII, 13-16. — But, as the ensuing lines show, the spirit of Hallam has become for the poet less "personal," in the earthly sense of the word; and is now more or less identical with the height and fulness of Life itself.

18. *paints a bow*: images a rainbow.

20. *a rose*: the symbol of love and joy.

CXXIII. 4. *the central sea*: Cf. "the homeless sea" of XXXV, 9. The primeval waters that covered the earth are contrasted in the poet's imagination with our present seas, which seem to have the land for a centre, or may be associated with certain countries as homes.

10. *my dream*: i.e., of a very personal reunion with the dead, as contrasted with the kind of communion suggested in CXXII.

CXXIV. Compare XCVI; and contrast LIV-LVI.

3. *He, They, One, All; within, without*: God, however imaged by the human mind — as one person (theism), several persons (polytheism), as one but not necessarily personal (monism), as the whole (pantheism); as within our spirit, or outside it.

5-6. *I found Him not* etc.: Vain is the search for God in nature. The first line suggests a contrast with Wordsworth's verse "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns" ("Tintern Abbey," line 97, page 8). The allusion intended by Tennyson, however, is to the "argument from design": the idea that the existence of God may be argued from the wonderful order appearing in the natural universe all the way from heavenly bodies to the insect's eye, implying design.

7-8. *the questions men may try*

self-control (line 14) and ordered thinking (lines 15-16).

CXII. 15. *world-wide fluctuation*: unstable opinions that sweep through the world. — The idea of this stanza seems to be that Hallam, as he could rise above the turmoil in his own urgent spirit, could see beyond the turmoil of nineteenth-century political and social experiment. His political insight and strength are treated in the next section.

CXIV. Compare the poem, lines 25-32.

8. *Submitting all things to desire*: By removing, without replacing, the beliefs and conventions which formerly controlled men's desires, — and by pointing to the unknown future in which any wish may be fulfilled (line 7), — she makes "desire" the arbiter. This is the "fire" that sits "on her forehead" (line 5). In this section, Tennyson has particularly in mind the desire for power (lines 15, 26).

10. *She cannot — — — of death*: No doubt the poet cites this as a very obvious and popular distinction (not as the *deepest* distinction) between knowledge and wisdom.

12-13. *some wild Pallas — — — Of demons*: a debasement of the myth that Pallas Athena (Minerva), goddess of wisdom, sprang at birth from the head of Zeus (Jupiter).

26-28. *Who grewest not alone in power* etc.: Cf. CXII, 9-16. — By naming "reverence" and "charity" here, where logic would require "Wisdom," the poet strongly suggests that wisdom is inseparable from them, and is a spiritual more than a mental quality (cf. lines 21-22). Previously it was suggested that with true wisdom belong "love and faith" (line 11).

CXV. This and the next section concern the third and last springtime in "In Memoriam." Contrast the poet's feeling toward spring in XXXVIII-XXXIX.

2-3. *Now burgeons . . . flowering squares*: Every tangled hedge around the flowering fields is putting forth buds.

4. *ashen roots*: roots of ash trees.

8. *sightless*: invisible.

17-20. *and in my breast* etc.: Cf. the last stanza of LXXXIII.

CXVI. 4. *crescent prime*: growing spring.

13-16. *Yet less of sorrow* etc.: This state of mind was prepared for in the allegory of the veiled statue and the "great ship" in CIII, 12 ff., 40 ff.

CXVII. 9-11. *For every grain* etc.: These three lines allude to the hour-glass, sun-dial, and clock; and thus they prepare for the opening verse of the next section.

CXVIII. The life of the human spirit, including its sense of immortality, is not to be imaged as a surface product of the aged and cooled Earth (lines 4, 7-9, 20; cf. XXXV, 12, and LVI, 19); but as a strong metal newly dug from the mysterious centre of the universe, and then made molten hot, and roughly shaped, by the human struggle (lines 21-25). Human evolution is thus different from the evolution of the Earth and her lower creatures. Their nature, however, was mingled in ours, and must be "worked out" by human effort (lines 25-28; cf. LVI, 13-18).

4. *earth and lime*: inorganic constituents of the human body.

7. *They say*: What follows is a poetic presentation of the nebular hypothesis, which Laplace had set forth early in the century.

10. *seeming-random*: Why "seeming," here and in the next line?

11. *cyclic storms*: periodical cataclysms.

15. *in higher place*: beyond death.

16-17. *If so he type — — — more to more*: if he thus more and more spiritually interpret the process of development going on in nature. — Lines 1-17 are concerned with the *interpretation*, lines 18-28 with the *conduct*, of life as viewed from the standpoint of development.

CXIX. Prepared for by CXVI, lines 9-16. — Contrast VII, in idea and detail.

6. *black fronts long-withdrawn*: The fronts of the houses had long been quite obscured; but now, as the next line suggests, they are marked off by the early dawn's pale gleam on the street.

CXX. 2-3. *wholly brain, Magnet mockeries*: mechanisms moved, through the agency of nerves and brain, by the magnetic

question. The eternity to which the friend belongs is concerned in the poet's present experience of the good (CXXIX) and the beautiful (CXXX).

CXXIX. 3-4. *O loved — — a higher:* Cf. the proem, lines 39-40. — In relation to the section as a whole, this passage suggests: — the more the poet perceives the duality of life, — the eternal constantly present to the temporal, and yet clearly different in quality, — the better he can feel the nature of his friend, and love it. For the friend's nature is dual: he is at once an earthly being, remembered and understood, but now far off; and an eternal being, not understood, but closely present.

11-12. *Behold I dream — — world with thee:* Cf. the last stanza of CXIV.

CXXX. The question which troubled the poet when applied to the *future* (see XLVII) disappears here in the experience of the *present*. The "soul" has answered "by the thing itself that is inquired after" (Emerson: "The Over-Soul," 17th paragraph). — This poem recalls "Adonais," stanzas XLII-XLIII (page 225); but Tennyson's context, tone, and emphasis are quite different from Shelley's.

10-12. *My love is vaster passion* etc.: Cf. the proem, lines 39-40.

CXXXI. This apostrophe is closely related to that of the four opening stanzas of the proem: the "living will" and the "Strong Son of God" are really identical.

9. *With faith that comes of self-control:* i.e., by exerting our higher will in shaping our lives, we may win firm faith in "one that with us works" (line 8) and "the hands — — moulding men" (last stanza of CXXIV). The idea is repeated, in Christian terms, in the proem, lines 15-16. — The quest of faith that runs throughout "In Memoriam" culminates in the pregnant simplicity of this single verse. It reminds us that some ways of faith essayed by the poet proved unfirm; and that, on the other hand, many efforts at self-discipline and self-development, though not guided by faith, were laying a firm way toward it (e.g., LXXXV, 49-52). Faith has been found at the top of the "stepping-stones" of effort that were directed, not

specifically toward faith, but toward "higher things" (first stanza of I).

3. *spiritual rock:* This phrase is applied by St. Paul to the Christ (*First Corinthians*, x, 4) in allusion to the rock from which Moses brought forth water in the wilderness (*Numbers*, xx, 11). Tennyson seems to have in mind only Moses' rock, as symbol of men's spiritual barrenness.

11-12. *Until we close* etc.: Cf. the mystic experience of XCV, 35-42.

EPILOGUE. "The poem concludes," said Tennyson, "with the marriage of my youngest sister Cecilia. It was meant to be a kind of *Divina Commedia*, ending with happiness." Is this a sufficient justification, artistically, for the epilogue — is it an organic part of "In Memoriam"?

6. *he:* Hallam. The "dark day" two lines below is that of his death.

13-16. *No longer caring* etc.: This stanza qualifies "love" (line 12).

27-28. *the moon — — bridal bower:* alluding to Milton's "Paradise Lost," IV, 598 ff.

34. *He:* Hallam again.

35. *thee:* the bridegroom, Edmund Lushington.

50. *on the dead:* i.e., those buried beneath the church floor.

115. *friths:* firths, narrow inlets of the sea.

123. *the vast:* eternity — symbolized, as so often in Tennyson, by the ocean (line 121).

133. *No longer half-akin to brute:* Cf. the last stanza of CXVIII.

137-140. *Whereof the man* etc.: Cf. CXXIX, 11-12.

142. *one element:* one simple substance or essence.

143-144. *And one — — creation moves:* Cf. LIV. — But here, as the preceding stanzas show, the poet is thinking more specifically of possible perfection on earth.

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

The episode occurred in the battle of Balaclava, 1854, early in the Crimean War

waged by England, France, and Turkey against Russia.

THE BROOK

Compare "In Memoriam," CI, 9-16. (363.) 1. *hern*: heron. The "coot" is a duck-like bird.

7. *thorps*: hamlets, villages.

9. *Philip's*: Philip is a character in the narrative poem from which this lyric is taken.

19. *fairy foreland*: diminutive (fairy-like) promontory.

31. *water-break*: ripple.

38. *covers*: coverts, thickets.

COME INTO THE GARDEN

"Maud" (in which this song occurs) is a poem of passion composed of lyrics that progressively unfold a story. In these dramatic lyrics, "different phases of passion in one person," as Tennyson said, "take the place of different characters." The "one person" is the hero,—of a high-strung, sensitive disposition, a kind of minor Hamlet,—who, before his devotion to Maud, is on the verge of madness or suicide. The best side of his nature is rendered in the pure fervor of such a song as the one here given.

(364.) 892. *To*: For the syntax, cf. line 886.

WILL

Notice the position of the "citadel" (line 9) and the "city" (line 20) in reference to the person described in each case.

(365.) 14. *suggesting*: insinuating, seducing.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

The poem resulted from Tennyson's second visit to this beautiful valley in the Pyrenees, in 1861. "Two and thirty years ago" (line 6)—actually one and thirty, i.e., in 1830—he had been there with Hallam.

MILTON

This is one of Tennyson's various attempts to reproduce in English the effect of classical verse. "My Alcaics are not intended for Horatian Alcaics. . . . The Horatian Alcaic is perhaps the stateliest metre in the world except the Virgilian hexameter at its best; but the Greek Alcaic, if we may judge from the two or three specimens left, had a much freer and lighter movement" (Tennyson).

Lines 1-8 allude to Book Sixth, and lines 9-16 to Book Fourth, of "Paradise Lost."

16. *Whisper* — — — *even*: i.e., the palm-woods tower up in the twilight.

THE FLOWER

This alludes to the initial unpopularity, and to the later imitations, of Tennyson's poetic style.

A DEDICATION

Addressed to the poet's wife, and published in the volume *Enoch Arden*, 1864.

(366.) 7. *the immeasurable world*: eternity.

12. *the fruit*: of the European *euonymus* or spindle-tree.

From BALIN AND BALAN

For Tennyson's early interest in Arthurian romance, see "The Lady of Shalott" (page 301) and "Sir Galahad" (page 319). His first Arthurian poem in blank verse was "Morte d'Arthur," which he composed before October, 1834, but did not publish till 1842. It may be inferred that the death of Hallam, and his subsequent years of brooding and discipline, and his composition of "In Memoriam," postponed whatever plans he may have had for an extensive treatment of the Round Table legends. At length, in 1859, "Enid," "Vivien," "Elaine," and "Guinevere" appeared. Then came another ten years' interval, ending with "The Holy Grail," "The Coming of Arthur," "Pelleas and

Ettarre," and "The Passing of Arthur" (the last named being a reissue, with added introduction and conclusion, of the early "Morte d'Arthur"). In 1871 "The Last Tournament" followed, in 1872 "Gareth and Lynette," and finally, in 1885, "Balin and Balan." The result could hardly be an epic with unified action, such as Tennyson's classical masters, or Milton, would have written; but rather, as his own term suggests, a series of idylls, or graceful, leisurely episodes,—affording ample opportunity for the poet's felicitous power of description and his command of the music of verse.

The twelve idylls are connected, however, by the central theme of Arthur's character and purposes. In Malory, he is the colorful king of romance, quite noble in nature but sharing the adventures and the human passions of his knights. In Tennyson, he is the temperate governor, refined and gracious,—nobly considerate in his treatment of those around him, but standing, as a rule, rather palely apart from their life. Broadly speaking, he embodies Tennyson's ideal (and, more or less, the middle century's ideal) of the modern gentleman-statesman, who holds his spirit above the pulling, tangled forces of the age, and yet strives to shape that age toward fruitful order—ever hoping that society may "make one music as before, but vaster." (Review the passages expressing Tennyson's political and social outlook: e.g., "Love Thou Thy Land," page 310; "In Memoriam," CVI-CXIV, CXXVII. See also Wordsworth's "Blest Statesman," page 55; Disraeli's "Wellington," page 300; etc.).

Tennyson felt the danger to modern society of the unloosed forces of wild idealism on the one hand and, on the other, of selfish desire. In the "Idylls of the King," wild idealism takes the form, mainly, of the romantic-religious ecstasy, followed by sad disillusion, of the unfit knights who follow the quest of the Holy Grail, deserting their Round Table duties. (See the introductory note on "Sir Galahad," page 722, above). That wild ecstasy, from Arthur's standpoint, is kin and ally of the selfish desires which are mainly instrumental in wrecking the State. From the

love of Lancelot and Guinevere, which is developed in the background throughout, comes eventually the chain of consequences forming the theme of "Guinevere" (page 366) and "The Passing of Arthur" (page 378),—the two closing idylls, and the strongest, in Tennyson's completed design.

A good introduction to them—for an obvious reason—is the present selection from the fifth idyll. In the sixth idyll, the power that Vivien calls "the fire of heaven" wins its first notable triumph over the Round Table idea, in Vivien's capture of Merlin, the King's wizard counsellor. For a fresh and vivid treatment of the same subject in recent poetry, read Mr. E. A. Robinson's "Merlin."

GUINEVERE

A suggestive contrast to this piece is presented by William Morris's "Defence of Guenevere," published in the preceding year.

(366.) 5-8. *Blurred by the creeping mist*, etc.: This physical atmosphere is maintained throughout the present poem and the first part of the next.

(367.) 28. *Enid*: the loyal, patient, and pure heroine of the third and fourth idylls, "The Marriage of Geraint" and "Geraint and Enid."—*lissome*: lithesome, nimble.

(368.) 127. *weald*: open country.

(369.) 147. *housel*: administration of the Eucharist.

(370.) 234. *Lyonesse*: a mythical region near Cornwall; see "The Passing of Arthur," line 81 ff. (page 380).

(371.) 289. *Bude and Bos*: small towns on the coast of Cornwall.

(372.) 333-334. *For manners — — noble mind*: Cf. "In Memoriam," CXI, 13-16 (page 355).

(373.) 395. *The Dragon* etc.: Regarding Arthur's father, we read in Geoffrey of Monmouth: "He was called Uther Pendragon, which in the British tongue signifies the dragon's head; the occasion of this appellation being Merlin's predicting, from the appearance of a dragon, that he should be king."

(377.) 597-601. *The moony vapor*, etc.: Cf. lines 5-8.

(378.) 668. *Let no one dream* etc.: echoing line 557.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

Lines 170-440 were Tennyson's early "Morte d'Arthur" (see the first paragraph of the note under "From 'Balin and Balan,'" above, — Compare Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Book XXI, Chapters 3-7, on which this poem is based.

14-17. *As if some lesser god had made the world* etc.: Cf. "In Memoriam," XXXIV, 5-8 (page 331).

76. *this blind haze*: See note to page 366, line 5-8, above.

(380.) 119-120. *or . . . Or*: either . . . or.

(381.) 180. *the moon was full*: See lines 124-125.

(382.) 205. *mere*: lake (as in line 219). This is the "great water" previously mentioned (see lines 175-180). In the distance it opens upon the ocean (lines 466-467).

(383.) 278. *conceit*: conception, fancy.

(384.) 312. *samite*: a heavy silk fabric, generally embroidered with gold.

315. *and lightly* etc.: Contrast the movement of line 280.

(385.) 366. *three queens*: See lines 452-456. — Malory says of the three queens: "one was King Arthur's sister, Queen Morgan le Fay; the other was the Queen of Northgalis; the third was the Queen of the Waste Lands. Also there was Nimue, the chief lady of the lake," etc. (XXI, ch. 6).

383. *greaves and cuisses*: armor for the leg, below the knee and above the knee.

403. *an image of the mighty world*: See "Guinevere," lines 460-463 (page 374).

(386.) 427. *Avilion*: the Celtic equivalent of the classical Happy Isles (see end of note to "Ulysses," line 63, page 720, above). The ensuing description is largely based on classical rather than Celtic sources. With line 431 compare *Odyssey*, X, 195.

445. *From the great deep*, etc.: "Merlin's song when he [Arthur] was born" (Tennyson).

NORTHERN FARMER

Here also "The old order changeth, yielding place to new" (line 408 of the preceding poem). — These two Northern Farmer monologues should be read aloud, successively, before being studied. The Lincolnshire dialect (the rustic speech of Tennyson's native county) has something of the Scotch "broadness," but also a decided drawl. A drawling and slurred pronunciation, not a sharp dieresis, is indicated by the two dots over the second of two vowels, e.g., "ääle." The pronouns "he" and "they," sometimes "I," are slurred into "a;" "me" into "ma;" "him" into "um;" and so on. Note also that oi = i (y); ow = ou (as in "hour").

OLD STYLE

liggin': lying.

(387.) 10. *'issèn*: himself.

11. *toithe*: tithe.

14. *cast oop*: cast up, confessed. —

Marris: Morris. — *barne*: bairn, child.

16. *raäte*: rate, poor tax.

18. *bummin'*: buzzing, droning. — *buzzard-clock*: cockchafer.

27-28. *I weänt sääy* etc.: The farmer's underlying notion seems to be as follows: — The Parson may be sincere, in spite of his smooth manner. And, in his own place, he may have hold of the truth (lines 17-20). As he is not a hard worker, however, how can he know God's intention in regard to me? — But if it be true that God is taking me, then he, like his parson, is meddling in a practical matter that he doesn't understand (lines 43-52).

30. *boggle*: bogey, goblin.

31. *butter-bump*: bitterness.

32. *stubbed*: To stub a piece of land ("lot") is to pull out the stubs or tree-roots. — *raäved an' rembled*: tore up ("rived") and threw out. When he prepared the ground for cultivation, he got rid of the bogey too.

33. *Keäper's*: i.e., it was the ghost of the keeper or game-warden of Thurnaby "waste" (wild piece of woodland).

34. *'enemies*: anemones.

35. *toäner*: one or the other.

36. *'soize*: the assizes.

(387.) 38. *fuzz*: furze, also commonly known as gorse.

40. *yows*: ewes.

(388.) 49. *äþoth*: halfpennyworth.

52. *hoälm*s: holms, level land on the banks of a stream.

53. *quoloty*: quality, gentry.

54. *thessèn*: themselves.

60. *rembles*: pulls out.

66. *'toüttler*: teetotaler.

NEW STYLE

To the old-style tenant farmer succeeds the new-style independent farmer with property interests — and different virtues!

5. *a crawl to pluck*: something awkward to settle (proverbial).

7. *to weeäk*: this week.

15. *blaws*: blows, blossoms.

17. *stunt*: obstinate.

(389.) 24. *as 'ant nowt*: that has nothing.

26. *addle*: earn.

27. *clear*: i.e., clear of debt.

30. *got shut on*: got rid of.

31. *grip*: ditch for draining a field.

— He's like a sheep on its back in the "ditch," unable to get up till somebody "lends a shove."

32. *far-weltered*: fow-weltered (said of a sheep lying on its back in a furrow).

38. *burn*: born.

39. *mays nowt*: makes nothing.

40. *the bees is as fell as owt*: the flies are as fierce as anything.

41. *esh*: ash.

52. *tued an' moiled*: bestirred himself and toiled.

53. *beck*: brook.

54. *Feyther run up*: Father's property ran up.

55. *brig*: bridgè.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

This poem may be read as the poet's answer to such doubts as those expressed in "In Memoriam," LV (page 336) concerning the divineness of Nature. — The universe — though not to be identified with God, as in lower kinds of pantheism — would be for us a true "Vision" or revela-

tion of him if we could fully understand and appreciate it. This we cannot do, because of the limitation of our faculties (lines 17-18): we fulfil our proper destiny when we catch "broken gleams" of God in Nature (lines 9-10). In the realm of the spirit, however, we can have direct contact with him (lines 11-12; cf. "In Memoriam," CXXIV, page 358).

(390.) 3-4. *Is not the Vision He* — — — *live in dreams*: Though only a dream or appearance, the universe may transiently represent God to us.

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

Higher and deeper than the vast flux of nature is the thought that can arise in a single man (line 32).

(391.) 21-24. *The deep has power* etc.: The same flux is touched upon in "In Memoriam," XXXV, 9-12; CXXIII, 5-8.

35-36. *Our hearing* — — — *not sight*: Cf. "The Higher Pantheism," lines 17-18.

THE REVENGE

The sea-fight occurred in September, 1591 (three years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada). Later in the same year a spirited account of it — which served Tennyson as basis for his poem — was published in a pamphlet by Grenville's cousin, Sir Walter Raleigh. — Sir Richard Grenville was serving as vice-admiral in the fleet of sixteen vessels which had been taken to the Azores by Lord Thomas Howard to intercept Spanish treasure-ships coming from America.

RIZPAH

Based on an incident which the poet had read in a penny magazine; see the *Memoir* of Tennyson, II, 249-251. The time of the story, as indicated under the title, is the eighteenth century when penal laws and religious dogmas were stricter. For the powerful suggestion of the title, see the story of Rizpah, a Biblical Niobe, in *Second Samuel*, XXI, 1-14. — In form, this poem, like the "Northern Farmer, Old

Style" (page 386), is a dramatic monologue spoken by a dying person to a single listener.

(394.) 6. *down*: a bare hill; here, near the sea.

7. *creak of the chain*: See line 35. (395.) 34. *the mail*: the mail-coach.

50. *the creatures*: See line 39.

(396.) 65-66. *He'll never put on the black cap* etc.: Alluding at once to the Judgment Day and to an English court of justice, where the judge puts on a black cap before sentencing a prisoner to death.

72. *The wind* etc.: Cf. lines 1-2.

73. *Election and Reprobation*: the Calvinistic doctrine of God's election (choice) of certain individuals to be saved, while the majority suffer reprobation (are consigned to eternal punishment).—The lady has continued the theme she opened in line 60.

79. *I have been with God in the dark*: Cf. line 17; and "In Memoriam," XCVI, lines 17-21 (page 350).—The theme of darkness that runs through the poem culminates in this line; but it is echoed in the next stanza.

83. *he used but to call in the dark*: Cf. lines 3-6.

"FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE"

For the title, see the note on "In Memoriam," LVII, page 726, above.—Desenzano is a town on Lake Garda, Italy, not far from the narrow peninsula of Sirmione (Latin: Sirmio) where Catullus had his country-house.

2. *venusta*: lovely. The quoted phrase is from Catullus.

8. *Lydian*: alluding to luxurious Lydia in Asia Minor, whence were supposed to have come the ancient Etruscans of the Lake Garda district.—Lines 8-9 are modelled on Catullus.

TO VIRGIL

"Written at the request of the Mantuans for the nineteenth centenary of Virgil's death" (Tennyson).—Virgil was born in Mantua and is here addressed as "Mantovano" (line 19), i.e., Mantuan.

3. *he that sang the "Works and Days"*: Hesiod.

(397.) 7. *Tityrus*: the shepherd piper in Virgil's first *Eclogue*.

8. *the poet-satyr* etc. Silenus, in the sixth *Eclogue*.

9. *Chanter of the Pollio, glorying* etc.: The fourth *Eclogue*, addressed to Pollio, sings of a coming golden age.

13. *this phantom shore*: Cf. "all the phantom, Nature" ("In Memoriam," III, 9). See line 11; and "The Higher Pantheism," lines 1-2 (page 390).

14. *Golden branch amid the shadows*: adapted from *Aeneid* VI, 208.

17. *the Northern Island* etc.: adapted from the first *Eclogue*, line 67.

THE ANCIENT SAGE

"The whole poem is very personal. The passages about 'Faith' and the 'Passion of the Past' were more especially my own personal feelings. This 'Passion of the Past' I used to feel when a boy" (From Tennyson's note. See *Memoir*, II, 319).—By commenting, through the mouth of a supposed ancient philosopher, upon successive passages of a lyric that renders the skeptic and hedonistic view of life alluringly, Tennyson succeeds in presenting his matured wisdom with fine charm and catholicity.

17-18. *Some death-song for the Ghouls* etc.: Cf. lines 4-5, 195-198.

31-39. *If thou wouldst hear the Nameless* etc.: This passage is like an after-meditation upon the experience given in "In Memoriam," CXXIV (page 358).

(398.) 45-46. *more mystic* etc.: The unaccountable phenomenon just described, since it belongs to the realm of knowledge and speculation, seems stranger to the Sage than self and God (the Nameless), of whom he can have direct experience (lines 32-34).

49. *seest*: in distinction from the *hearing* implied above (line 34). The same sort of distinction is made in "The Higher Pantheism" (page 390).

83-90. *That none but gods* etc.: A firmer expression of the idea rendered in "The Passing of Arthur," lines 13-21 (page 378).

(399.) 106-110. *My words are like the babblings* etc.: In this "dream-world" of ours, we cannot *talk* coherently of the eternal; but we can *act* in harmony with it.

131. *had*: would have.

178-182. *and we, — the poor earth's dying race* etc.: Cf. "In Memoriam," CXVIII, 1-7 (page 357).

(400.) 212-213. *the silent Word* etc.: silent but universal intimations of eternity in the human spirit (as distinguished from external revelations; cf. in "In Memoriam," XXXIV-XXXVI, page 331).

229-239. *For more than once* etc.: Another account of this mystic experience of Tennyson's boyhood is given in a short poem called "The Mystic" (1830). Later experience of the same sort is reflected in "Sir Galahad" (page 319), and "In Memoriam," XCV (page 348). — A penetrating treatment of the subject will be found in Paul Elmer More's essay on Tennyson (*Shelburne Essays*, vol. VII).

231. *The word* etc.: his name.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

Compare the close of the preceding poem (lines 276-285). — Observe the reason for having the man, instead of "Old Age," do all the speaking in the last stanza.

FAR—FAR—AWAY

Compare "The Ancient Sage," lines 214-228 (page 400). The idea has something in common with that of Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" (page 40); but Tennyson's tone and emphasis are different.

THE MAKING OF MAN

The same idea as in "In Memoriam," CXVIII (page 357); but with a different emphasis.

DOUBT AND PRAYER

(403.) 10-12. *Let blow the trumpet* etc.: alluding to the taking of Jericho (*Joshua*, Chapter vi).

CROSSING THE BAR

Tennyson requested that this be placed at the end of all editions of his works. It may profitably be compared with the other short poems of 1889-1892 (pages 401-403): to which of them is it most closely related?

6. *Too full for sound*: Cf. line 3.

7. *drew*: For the verb "draw" in similar context, see "In Memoriam," CIII, 38.

8. *Turns*: suggests the turning of the tide, as well as the soul, seaward.

13. *bourne*: a bounded territory, in contrast with "boundless deep" (line 7). — And "our" is in contrast with the singular pronoun of the context.

15. *my Pilot*: "that Divine and Unseen who is always guiding us" (Tennyson). — *face to face*: in contrast with the dim reflections seen in this life; cf. *First Corinthians*, XIII, 12.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

Most of his life, Browning's environment was that of the city, and of men and women. Three years after Tennyson was born amid the gently undulating wolds of Lincolnshire, the other great Victorian poet was born in a suburb of London. Of formal schooling he had little in his early years, nor did he attend either of the two chief universities. The most telling part of his education he acquired at home, largely through his remarkable father, a clerk in the Bank of England, who was a devoted reader in both classical and modern literature, a maker of eighteenth-century verse and of fantastic rhymes, an amateur draughtsman skilled in portraiture and caricature, a collector of prints and of old and curious books. Browsing in his father's library, the young Browning acquired a large and irregular fund of learning, upon which he was to draw freely in the years of his poetic apprenticeship and later. To the influence of his mother, we may partly ascribe his life-long love of music. His love of the art of painting, also life-long, was encouraged and trained by visits to the Dulwich Gallery, then the

leading public gallery in England — "the gallery I so love and am so grateful to, having been used to going there when a child far under the age allowed by the regulations." The effects of this early urging of his artistic instincts, and of his unsystematic education through books, are written plain throughout his poetry.

In his first poems, the dominant spirit was that of Byron; but presently chancing upon a volume of Shelley, he devoted himself to that "Sun-Treader" (as he styled him in his first published work, *Pauline*) with unreserved ardor, avowing himself an atheist and vegetarian, and emulating his soaring idealism and eager, prismatic diction. With *Pauline* (1833) the obvious influence of Shelley ends; but Browning ever retained his veneration for his early master (as the poem "Memorabilia," page 430, suggests), and doubtless continued to feel his influence as an ingredient in his own art and outlook on life. Two years after *Pauline*, he already stood before the world in his own right: in *Paracelsus*, 1835, the Browning that we know is fully present.

Though Browning's reputation grew more slowly than Tennyson's, it began with *Paracelsus*, published when he was but twenty-three. The poem was admired by the actor Macready, who urged Browning to write a play. Possessing dramatic talent without being a born playwright, Browning now gave some eight years mainly to the composition of dramas, of which the first was *Stafford* and the most successful, for the stage, *The Blot on the 'Scutcheon*. Meanwhile, he was engaged on *Sordello*, a long and obscure study of the forgotten Italian poet of that name, and writing short poems that he labelled "dramatic lyrics" and "dramatic romances." These short poems showed where his strength really lay: in the form now commonly known as the dramatic monologue, a form in which one person speaks, not to himself, as in soliloquy, but to one or more other persons, and in the course of which he tells a story, more or less allusively, and reveals his own character and that of others. A typical instance is "My Last Duchess" (page 410).

In 1845 Browning made the acquaint-

ance of the poetess Elizabeth Barrett, engaging in a vivid correspondence (*Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, 1845-46*) that later became famous. In 1846 they were married, and proceeded to Italy, which was to be their home for the fifteen years that ended in Mrs. Browning's death. It was during these years that Browning produced his best work, the volume of *Men and Women* (1855), dedicated to his wife in an epilogue called "One Word More." It was followed, three years after his bereavement, by *Dramatis Personae* (1864); and presently he completed his extraordinary narrative poem of over 21,000 lines, *The Ring and the Book* (1868-69), — consisting of a series of long dramatic monologues, in which the same story, an obscure old Roman murder story, is represented as interpreted by the participants and various outsiders, each seeing the truth in his own refracting way. Though uneven in interest and excellence, it contains some of Browning's most notable achievements, — the monologues of Caponsacchi, Pompilia, and the Pope.

After *The Ring and the Book*, — from 1870 to his death, — Browning pushed to the extreme his inclination for the minutely psychological and the perversely rough and unmusical. Yet his lyrical gift, which had early displayed itself in the songs of "Paracelsus" and "Pippa Passes," and had run in a recurrent thread of lovely melody through the series of dramatic monologues, never deserted him wholly: he was still capable of fine lyric jets that carry us back to Shelley and the Elizabethans. He was also, in these last years, paying his tribute — not to be expected from one of his temperament and turn of mind — to the classics, translating, into difficult English, plays by Aeschylus, Euripides, and Aristophanes. At least one quality, however, he shared with his Greeks: he was eagerly delighted in the world; and he was unafraid to leave it ("Epilogue," page 472).

PARACELSUS

The extracts are from the dying speech of Paracelsus, the mystic and scientist. He

utters those ideas of joy, development, power, and love that run through Browning's subsequent poetry.

(404.) 661. *cyclops-like*: The Cyclops were one-eyed giants, the eye being circular and in the middle of the forehead; they labored as smiths, sometimes in workshops under Mount Etna.

672. *dorrs*: beetles with a black, shiny surface.

(405.) 712-715. *And from the grand result* etc.: From the nature of man, since it is the outcome of all, an illumination is shed upon the nature of the inferior creatures.

729. *but*: but that (i.e., without suggesting to the hearer that, etc.).

(406.) 771-772. *But in completed man* — — — *to God*: This sentence sums up the thought of the context, which is as follows: — (1) The first phase of human development is social and natural. It will be complete when the natural powers of all men, as members of a social organism, shall be "full-blown" (lines 747-764). (2) The second phase, which overlaps the first, is individual and, in a sense, supernatural. It means that great individuals shall follow splendid ideals not realizable in this world (lines 773-779); shall overtop the narrow conventions that regulate society (lines 779-782); and shall be the means of "saving" ordinary men (lines 783-785).

(406.) 871-884. *In my own heart* etc.: See part (2) of the preceding note. Paracelsus explains why he, though a great individual, failed in his *social* function. Compare lines 697-704.

PIPPA PASSES

Probably the most popular of Browning's longer poems. Pippa, a happy-hearted little mill-hand, produces through her songs a crucial effect, of which she herself is unaware, upon the lives of the persons whom she passes during one day, — her single holiday of the year. The poem, which is opened and closed by Pippa in soliloquy, contains four separate dramatic episodes, thrown upon a vivid background of Italian town life. A brief street-girl scene, forming part of that background,

is a powerful example of a kind of realism which is prominent in the literature of the present time. The third song in the text is sung by one of the street-girls; the other two are Pippa's.

CAVALIER TUNES

MARCHING ALONG

(407.) 15. *young Harry*: Sir Henry Vane the Younger.

16. *Rupert*: Prince Rupert, in command of cavalry for the King.

17-18. *keep we not here* etc.: Do we not keep marching along here?

20. *snarls*: instead of "snarlars."

23. *Nottingham*: where the King's standard was set up in 1642, at the opening of the Civil War.

GIVE A ROUSE

Compare Scott's "Glee for King Charles" (page 95).

16. *Noll's*: Oliver Cromwell's.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

Ratisbon in Bavaria was captured by assault in 1809, after being obstinately defended by the Austrians. In the actual incident the hero was a man.

(408.) 29. *flag-bird*: Napoleon's standard was the tricolor with the figure of an eagle in the central stripe.

THE LOST LEADER

Suggested by Wordsworth's case; but the motives here assigned for the Leader's change of politics (lines 1-2) were not intended to apply to him. Even in advanced years Browning continued to deplore Wordsworth's conversion to Conservatism. See Wordsworth's "Protest against the Ballot" (page 56); and Shelley's "To Wordsworth" (page 173).

(409.) 8. *Rags* — *were they purple* etc.: explained by line 2.

SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER

(409.) 8. *Hell dry you up* etc.: The metric stress is upon "you," which is thus thrown into contrast with "that rose" (line 6).

10. *Salve tibi!* Save you! (greeting before the meal).

39. *Arian*: a follower of Arius (256-336), whose doctrine, in contrast to orthodox Trinitarianism, was that the Son was created by and inferior to the Father. — How does the religiosity of lines 37-40, and elsewhere, agree with the *rest* of the speaker's character?

(410.) 49. *a great text in Galatians*: Browning had in mind such passages as *Galatians* III, 10, etc.

56. *Manichee*: ("ch" pronounced "k") Manicheism or Manicheanism, a heresy of the same period as Arianism, combined Oriental with Christian doctrines.

60. *Belial*: the spirit of licentiousness.

70. *Hy, zy, Hine*: invented exclamations expressing hate.

71-72. *Plena gratia, Ave, Virgo!* Hail, Virgin, full of grace!

72. *you swine*: Cf. line 16.

MY LAST DUCHESS

Ferrara, indicated by Browning as the scene of the story, is an old town in northern Italy famous for the pride and splendor of its aristocracy. It was the capital of the dukes of Este, accomplished and cruel tyrants of the late Renaissance.

3. *Fra*: brother. "Pandolf" is an imaginary monk and painter of the Italian Renaissance. — "Claus," in the last line, is also imaginary.

5-6. *I said — — — by design*: explained by lines 16 ff.

16-17. "*Her mantle laps*" etc.: i.e., Her beautiful wrist should appear more — so as to be copied in the picture.

21-24. *She had A heart* etc.: The Duke disparages in her *personality* that which he praises in her *picture*.

(411.) 45. *commands*: A comment by Browning shows that he himself did not conceive the exact nature of these commands.

CRISTINA

The name was suggested by the Princess Christina of Naples (1806-1878), afterwards Queen of Spain, who was a handsome coquette.

11-14. *no vile cant — — — the sea feels*: Certainly (he asserts) her look did not convey the following pretentious sentiment: "You are a bleak, lone shore, which I, the great sea, feel the need of enriching with my trivial favors" (seed-pearl).

15. *such souls*: such sea-like souls as mine (Cristina's).

32. *That away* etc.: Which the other impulses (toward honor, etc., lines 27-28) have trifled away.

39. *It stops* etc.: Supply "which" at the beginning of the line, and "by means of" before "this."

(412.) 44. *if you choose it*: if you choose the "prospect" (line 43); i.e., if you prefer the "ends" and "blisses" of life after death to those of this life.

49. *next moment*: in contrast to the *great moment* (lines 18-48).

IN A GONDOLA

27. Supply "which" before *the daylight world*.

33. *cruce*: crucible.

34. *mage*: magician.

47. *wried*: wrung.

(413.) 72. *sprite*: spirit; in apposition with "I" (line 73).

75. *ruddier ray*: i.e., her beauty and love, which will give his spirit "full play" (line 74).

108. *stilet*: stiletto.

120. *Go find the bottom*: spoken to the jewel (line 122). — The ensuing question is addressed to her lover, who has caught at her hand. — With the exclamation "There!" she flings the jewel. — The context indicates that the feel of the water and the nearness of the ribbon-grass inspired her with a sudden dislike for the artificial ornament.

(414.) 127. *the Giudecca*: a canal in Venice.

140. *came you*: i.e., onto the balcony (line 146).

141. *lory*: parrot.

178. *the nymph*: another object in the girl's room.

180-181. *As the dry limpet* etc.: As the limpet bends from his shell for the limpid water ("lymph") of the tide, which has come to him with its familiar murmur.

186. *Schidone's eager Duke*: an hypothetical picture by Schidone (1560-1616). — The four paintings (lines 186-200) are all imaginary, though suggestive of the respective artists' styles.

188. *Haste-thee-Luke*: nickname of the painter Luca Giordano (1632-1705).

190. *Castelfranco*: a name of the painter Giorgione (1478-1511).

192. *Ser*: sir. — This painting is assigned in the next line to Tiziano Vecelli (Titian, 1477-1576).

(415.) 222-224. *Heart to heart* etc.: In her yearning she forgets, for the moment, her own precaution (lines 220-222), and thus brings upon him the watching "Three." When stabbed, he comforts her by saying, "It was ordained to be so," etc. (line 225 ff.).

THE FLOWER'S NAME

In this "garden fancy," as Browning called it, a devotee of full-blown June roses settles his chief favor upon the bud of an unfamiliar rock-plant, over which the girl he loves had lingered. — Contrast the style of Tennyson's "Come Into the Garden" (page 363).

SONG: NAY BUT YOU

(416.) 7. *Because*: follows "speak truth" (line 3).

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB

"Do I live, am I dead?" (lines 13, 113) suggests the main idea of this tragic grotesque. Compare the Bishop's view of art with that of the speaker in "My Last Duchess" (page 410).

(417.) 1. *Vanity* etc.: see *Ecclesiastes*, I, 2.

21. *the epistle-side*: the right-hand side (facing the altar) where the epistle is read in the mass-service.

22. *the choir*: that part of a church occupied by the choir and clergy.

26. *tabernacle*: the stone canopy over the recumbent effigy on the tomb; in this case, supported by nine columns.

41. *olive-frail*: basket of woven rushes for holding olives.

42. *lapis lazuli*: a stone of azure color.

51. *Swift* etc.: see *Job*, VII, 6.

55. *frieze* — — — *beneath*: the ornamental band running around the tomb, beneath the slab of basalt (line 25). Its details are given in the ensuing lines.

(418.) 58. *tripod*: emblem of the Delphic oracle of Apollo. — *thyrsus*: the symbolic staff of Bacchus.

66. *travertine*: a cheap kind of limestone.

70-71. *my bath* etc.: Cf. line 46.

77. *Tully's*: Cicero's.

79. *Ulpian*: He lived 170-228 A. D., when Latin literature had declined.

87. *crook*: bishop's staff — placed between the clasped hands of the effigy.

95. *Saint Praxed* etc.: indicates the confusion in the dying man's mind, and in his daily interests; cf. line 59 ff.

99. *Elucescebat*: "he was illustrious," — in classic Latin, "elucebat;" see line 78.

108. *visor*: mask. — *Term*: bust representing the Roman god Terminus.

116. *Gritstone*: a coarse sandstone; cf. line 66 and the note.

(419.) 122. *in my church*: explained by lines 85-90.

SAUL

For the episode, see *First Samuel*, XVI, 14-23.

(420.) 45. *jerboa*: a jumping rodent of the deserts, about six inches in length; so swift that it seems "half bird" (line 46).

(421.) 127. *the chest* — — — *subsided*: as the hills beneath the autumn sunset subside into silence (line 125).

(422.) 130-131. *pressing* — — — *beauty*:

pressing, as in a wine-press, all of life's mere strength and beauty.

(422.) 151. *the tree*: the date-palm.—The ensuing lines are the sequel of lines 130-133.

(423.) 203. *Hebron*: an ancient city in the high mountains south of Jerusalem.

204. *Kidron*: a brook in the valley east of Jerusalem.

(424.) 234. *the future*: the future fame predicted in lines 175-190.

238-286. *I have gone the whole round* etc.: Section XVII, though elaborate in expression, is simple in its main argument. This has four phases, as indicated in the text by the dash at the beginning of lines 255, 263, and 275. The thought as a whole turns upon the "great moment" of experience that came to David in lines 231-237; the atmosphere of which was prepared in section XIV.

(425.) 291. *Sabaoth*: hosts, armies (as in the phrase "Lord God of Sabaoth").

(426.) 331. *the new law*: i.e., of love.

334. *witnessing*: bearing testimony.

"DE GUSTIBUS"

"De Gustibus non est disputandum" corresponds to the English proverb, "There's no accounting for tastes."—Contrast the mood of "Home-Thoughts" (page 416).

22. *cicala*: cicada, locust.

(427.) 42. *Lost her, Calais*: occasioned her the loss of Calais. This occurred in 1558; soon afterwards, in her last illness, she said: "When I am dead and opened, you will find Calais lying upon my heart."

UP AT A VILLA

10. *my own*: my skull (line 8).

11. *Why?*: Here, as often at such points in Browning's dramatic monologues, the indication is that the "silent listener" has interposed, by word or look.

(428.) 34. *thrid*: thread.

39. *diligence*: stage-coach.

42. *Pulcinello-trumpet*: trumpet announcing the Punch and Judy show.—*breaks up the market*: disrupts the business of buying and selling.

44. *liberal thieves*: This indicates the "Italian person of quality's" attitude toward the republican patriots.

48-49. *Who is Dante* etc.: Who rivals Dante, etc., with his ability as poet, etc.; and has now *approached* St. Paul, with his ability as preacher.

52. *seven swords*: symbolic of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

9. Supply "which" before *its prince*.

15. Supply "which" before *certain rills*.

(429.) 19-20. *Where the domed* etc.: in contrast to line 13.

24. Supply "which" before *men might*.

34. *shame*: i.e., the disfavor of the prince and others.

65. *causeys*: causeways.

72. *Each on each*: eyes to eyes and lips to lips.

78. *Gold, of course*: It was wealth, of course, that enabled them to do all this (lines 73-77).

79-81. *Oh heart! oh blood that freezes* etc.: The human heart frozen, or fired, by worldly interests (cf. lines 33-36),—that is what Earth gains from centuries of ill endeavor!

(430.) 82-84. *Shut them in* etc.: Cover up those centuries (as Nature has covered this city, lines 26-30). The best of all triumphs and glories is love.

MEMORABILIA

The title means "things worthy of remembrance."—Some everyday person whom he happened to meet (imaged by the "moor," line 9) might have, for Browning, nothing memorable except a chance recollection (a "moulded . . . eagle-feather") of the soaring Shelley.

MISCONCEPTIONS

11. *dalmatic*: vestment.

WOMEN AND ROSES

In this fantasy, the tree's three roses, — faded, blooming, and newly-budded, — have for their respective guardian-spirits the beautiful women of the past, present, and future; all moving "to one cadence" (line 11) and unable to pause. The idea is that the poet's own loved one, symbolized by "my rose-tree," vivifies his appreciation of all feminine beauty; but, still more, draws his personal passion to herself alone.

LOVE IN A LIFE

The inmost meaning of the loved one eludes the lover, mysteriously. But he joys to spend a life-time in the quest, — exploring the "wide house" of common experience (line 3) which love has provided them.

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

In attempting to shape into poetic form some thought about love, the poet finds it elusive as spider-film (lines 6-20); and broods upon the incalculable motions and desires of nature (lines 21-35). Thus he approaches his main theme (lines 36 ff.), which is closely allied to that of the preceding poem.

(432.) 21. *The champagna*: the Campagna, the great plain about Rome.

57. *the thread*: Cf. line 8 ff.

IN A YEAR

The story here suggested is the ironic sequel of lines 31-35 of the preceding poem. This time the woman, who is now the man's wife, is the speaker. Her musings have a profound pathos in their simplicity.

(433.) 3-4. *his face As before*: i.e., wearing the look of love. — The present situation of the two must be inferred from lines 5-8, 73-75.

13. *that very way*: i.e., through the unaccountable effect upon him of her slightest movements.

20. *Sweetly too*: i.e., even her silent

occupations made him look as enraptured as though she were singing sweetly.

53. *change*: exchange. — The "gold" was his love; the "dust," her advantages (lines 45-48).

69-70. "*Dying*" etc.: To think that such a slight pretty thing could feel deeply enough to die of love for me! (cf. line 65).

75-80. *How perplexed* etc.: Can any divine purpose appear through my husband's deadness of heart?

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

Compare the preceding poem.

(434.) 9. *the creature*: the hawk (line 8); i.e., contentiousness.

16. *the tree*: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Eden.

21-24. *Be a god* etc.: Perhaps Browning has in mind Adam's failure to master Eve and keep her from temptation ("Paradise Lost," IX, 192 ff.).

RESPECTABILITY

3. *recognized your plighted troth*: i.e., as equivalent to regular marriage. — The speaker's idea is that if the world, in a moment of caprice, had refrained from ostracizing the two on account of their irregular union, they would not so quickly have learned to *do without* the world's superficial respectability.

21. *The Institute*: the French Institute; used here as symbol of the "world's good word." — The two noted men in the next line were politically opposed to each other in the middle nineteenth century, but were both members of the Institute, where (as the speaker insinuates) the one could give the other a conventional welcome.

23-24. *Eh? Down the court* etc.: (spoken sarcastically) Well, well! festal lamps are flaring: let's put on our best gait, in this fashionable quarter!

THE STATUE AND THE BUST

The preceding poem may serve as an introduction to this one. Compare also the

theme of Browning's "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon."—The present story is based on a Florentine tradition concerning the fine equestrian statue of Duke Ferdinand First, made by John of Douay in 1608, which stands in the Piazza (Square) della Santa Annunziata, facing toward the old Riccardi palace (lines 1-3).

(435.) 22. *encolure*: neck and shoulders of a horse.

33. *the pile*: Ferdinand's palace.

36. *a crime*: Cosimo dei Medici (1389-1461), who built and lived in this palace, undermined the republican liberties of Florence.

57. *catafalk*: a structure for supporting a coffin.

(436.) 95. *Petraja*: a suburb of Florence.

100. *leaves*: comes from.

(437.) 140. *simple*: foolish.

(438.) 189. *where* — — — *shrine*: The shrine is just beneath the window, where Robbia's cornice with the carved face of the lady is supposed to have been formerly (see lines 172, 187).

213. *At idleness* etc.: At his own easy-going nature (lines 209-210) in its fruitless aspiration toward vigorous love.

224. *the end of life being manifest*: the purpose of this earthly life being manifestly love; cf. "Cristina," lines 35-46 (page 411).

233-234. *Where a button* — — — *very Guelph*: In a gambling-game played for buttons, it would be foolish to offer real coins.—*epigram*: a matter for satiric comment.

237. *a dram*: a drink.

238-243. *Stake your counter as boldly* etc.: This principle was applied, for example, in the case of "The Lost Leader," lines 29-30 (page 409).

246. *each frustrate ghost*: See lines 175-186, 211-213.

250. *De te, fabula*: The story concerns you.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

This noble grotesque presents an imaginary Renaissance scholar whose character is just the opposite of that of the Bishop at St. Praxed's (page 417). In both cases, a

life is viewed in retrospect from its close. (439.) 3. *crofts*: small farms.—*thorpes*: villages.

(440.) 45. *play*: Cf. lines 33-35.

45-46. *grappled* — — — *escaping*: struggled for knowledge as a means of rising above the world.

48-49. *their shaping* etc.: the view of human life formulated by poets and philosophers.

68. *Sooner, he spurned it*: Or, rather, he spurned the actual life (line 65).

86. *Calculus*: the stone.

88. *Tussis*: a cough.

95. *soul-hydroptic*: spiritually over-thirsty.

97-100. *Oh, if we draw a circle premature* etc.: Cf. lines 69-72.

(441.) 129-130. *Hoti . . . Oun*: Greek particles.

131. *the doctrine of the enclitic De*: The Greek particle "de," when affixed to another word, changes its meaning; this "doctrine" is attributed by poetic fiction to the Grammarian.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

Andrea (1486-1531) was called "del Sarto" because his father was a tailor.—Vasari's *Lives of the Italian Painters* provided Browning with details for this and the next poem.

15. *Fiesole*: a town near Florence. (442.) 26. *serpentining*: sinuous and undulant.—*rounds*: suggesting both curves and coils.

32. *no one's*: as though she belonged to no one.—The beauty of her face is admired (and thus appropriated) by everybody; but she, in return, has little feeling for her husband or anyone else.—See her expression in Andrea's painting that suggested this poem to Browning; the picture is reproduced in W. H. Griffin's *Life of R. B.*, and elsewhere.

37. *at the point of*: in regard to.

57. *cartoon*: the drawing for a fresco painting; cf. line 60.

(443.) 87. *nearer heaven*: i.e., in excellence of form.

93. *Morello*: the highest of the mountains north of Florence.

(443.) 97-98. *Ah, but — — heaven for?*
Cf. the preceding poem, lines 97-104.

100. *want*: lack.

105. *The Urbinate*: Raphael (1483-1520), born at Urbino.

130. *Agnolo*: Michael Angelo (1475-1564).

(444.) 150. *Fontainebleau*: the royal palace near Paris, where Andrea visited King Francis First.

168. *gray*: Cf. lines 35, 98.

174. *the triumph*: i.e., as a painter; in contrast with "the triumph" of the preceding line.

184-193. *Said one day Agnolo* etc.: Cf. line 76 and context.

(445.) 218. *That gold of his*: entrusted by him to Andrea, for the purchase of works of art.

234. *Your friend*: Cf. line 5.

(446.) 263. *Leonard*: Leonardo da Vinci. (1452-1519); Andrea here names the three great Italian painters of the time.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

Filippo Lippi (c. 1406-1469), realistic painter of the earlier Renaissance, was a greater artist than his modesty in the poem lets appear. However, he is here represented in the early stage of his career, while employed in Cosimo's palace (see the notes on "The Statue and the Bust," lines 33, 36, above). "As this palace was built in 1430 and Fra Lippo seems to be engaged in decorating the walls, the imaginary date of the poem is apparently before Fra Lippo left the cloister in 1432, as, indeed, line 7 seems to indicate" (Professor J. M. Manly). Two events from Lippo's later life may serve as comments on Browning's view of him. In 1442 he obtained, for life, the rectorate of a parochial church near Florence. In 1456 he fell in love with a girl half his age who had become a nun against her will, and later the two were recognized as a married couple by a papal dispensation granted on the recommendation of Cosimo; their son became the renowned painter, Filippino.

3. *you think you see a monk!*: as though every monk should be suspected by the City Guards!

7-12. *The Carmine's my cloister* etc.: Since you make so free with me, you might as well look into the conduct of all my brethren (including my "betters") at the monastery.—Hereupon, Lippo's captors give signs of discomfiture (line 12).

17. *Master*—*a*: Lippo jocosely pretends to have difficulty in remembering the great man's name.—The effect of this name upon the guard who has hold of Lippo's throat is indicated in the next line. (447.) 53-57. *Flower o' the broom*: The lines concerning flowers in this and Lippo's subsequent lyrics were suggested to Browning by a certain type of Italian folk-song.

58. *titter*: wavering movement.

88. *trussed*: seized and carried off (as a falcon trusses a fowl).

(448.) 121. *Eight*: magistrates of Florence.

130. *antiphonary*: choir-book.

141. *front*: look.

(449.) 189. *Giotto*: (1266-1337) painter, and reviver of art in Italy.

196. *Herodias*: see *Matthew*, xiv, 6-11.

209. *The Prior's niece . . .*: The dots represent some such expression as "I mean to say," as in line 196. Observe that Lippo had copied the niece's face in two pictures of opposite character.

(450.) 227. *in the Corner-house*: See line 18.

228. *fast*: secure.

231-237. *the old grave eyes* etc.: On account of his acute receptivity, and his lack of self-confidence, Lippo vividly retains impressions that go against his grain, as well as those that delight him.

235. *Brother Angelico*: Fra Angelico (1387-1455), who maintained the traditions of the monastic school of painters. He often prepared himself for painting by fasting and prayer.

236. *Brother Lorenzo*: Lorenzo Monaco; he had been Fra Lippo's teacher.

257. *The only good of grass* etc.: See *Isaiah*, xl, 6; *Luke*, iii, 17; etc.

276. *Guidi*: Tommaso Guidi, otherwise called Masaccio; actually he was older than Lippo, and was his chief master.—In the context, Lippo foresees the full flush of Renaissance "realism" (as in the

work of Andrea del Sarto and his contemporaries).

(451.) 307. *cullion*: low fellow; see line 31 ff.

328. *Who turn the Deacon* etc.: According to the legend Saint Laurence was so brave that, when being broiled to death on a gridiron, he bade his tormentors turn him over as he was "done on one side."

(452.) 344. *I shall paint a piece*: The picture described in the remainder of the poem is "The Coronation of the Virgin," painted by Lippo for St. Ambrose Church. It is reproduced in W. H. Griffin's *Life of R. B.*

347. *a cast o' my office*: a stroke of my kind of art.

354. *Saint John* etc.: John the Baptist, patron saint of Florence; for his "camel-hair" (line 375) see *Matthew*, III, 4. — In the painting, he stands close to, and in striking contrast with, the stout Lippo.

377. *Iste perfecit opus*: This man executed the work (i.e., the picture). — These words appear on a scroll running between the speaker and Lippo, in the lower right-hand corner of the painting.

380. *kirtles*: women's gowns.

381. *hot cockles*: a game in which a person, kneeling with his face hidden in another's lap, is struck by one of the players, and must guess the striker's name.

392. *fear me*: fear for me.

AN EPISTLE OF KARSHISH

For the story of Lazarus, see *John*, XI, 1-44.

(453.) 17. *Snake-stone*: a variable porous substance, supposed to cure snake-bites.

28. *Vespasian*: The Emperor Nero's general, who began his march against Palestine in 66 A.D. — Jerusalem was captured in the year 70.

42. *viscid choler*: sticky bile.

43. *tertians*: intermittent fevers.

47. *Take five and drop them*: i.e., into some liquid the name of which Karshish withholds. Spider's flesh, as a component of various mixtures, was regarded as a cure for a number of diseases.

55. *gum-tragacanth*: got from certain shrubs in the Near East, and employed to give firmness to pills, lozenges, and the like.

57. *porphyry*: a hard rock, used in this case for a mortar.

(454.) 89. *conceit*: fancy, idea.

91. *vantage*: favorable opportunity.

94. Supply "which" before *The just-returned* etc.

96. *or . . . or*: either . . . or.

103. *figment*: figment (i.e., fiction) of the imagination. — This refers to the "first conceit" (line 89) and the "firm conviction" (line 97).

107. *the after-life*: his life on earth after being restored by Christ.

109. *fifty years of age*: If taken literally (see note to line 28, above) this would make Lazarus a mere youth at the time of the miracle (about 33 A.D.), though according to tradition he was then thirty years old.

(455.) 126. *in fixed middle-life*: in the fixed habits of middle age.

174. *Thou*: used indefinitely, like "thee" in line 167. — *the child*: see line 162.

179. *It is — — — forcedly*: i.e., earthly life, which the miracle forced him to resume. It now seems to him like a slight thread running across the vast "orb" of eternity (line 180).

(456.) 229-231. *flowers of the field — — — loving what they make*: This is similar to Christ's view of the "lilies of the field" (*Matthew*, VI, 28-30).

250. *to*: up to. — He was accused of everything from common wizardry up to the erection of a monstrous system of religion.

(457.) 312. *The madman saith* etc.: Cf. lines 275-277. — Compare the closing paragraph, in substance, with section XVIII of "Saul" (page 425).

ABT VOGLER

George Joseph Vogler (1749-1814), Bavarian priest and musician, was especially famous as an improviser. The "musical instrument of his invention" was an orchestrion (i.e., an organ with a wide range), on which he gave performances

throughout Europe. "His inventive genius did much for music . . . but he had not the wise judgment which was necessary to perfect success. He suggested rather than accomplished great results. . . . As a composer . . . it was his aim to enrich the old church music with the wealth of harmony at the command of modern music" (G. W. Cooke, *Guide-Book to the Works of R. B.*).—Browning, himself a charming extemporizer on the piano, had evidently brooded on the fact that most of Vogler's music had to die with him,—finding here a striking instance of the "broken arcs" of art and life in general, and a musical opportunity for his own ideal doctrine (stanzas IX-XI).

(458.) 7. *the ineffable name*: In Oriental legend, Solomon could summon the demons and powers of nature by means of a seal on which was engraved the unspeakable name of God.

19. *rampired*: ramparted.

23. *Rome's dome*: the dome of St. Peter's.

34. *Presences plain in the place*: spirits of the present—in contrast with the dimmer spirits of the future (lines 34-36) and of the past (lines 37-38).

34. *Protoplast*: the original model or type of created things and beings. Cf. Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," Act First, lines 195-206 (page 185).

(459.) 45. *still*: in this case also (as in painting).

51. *this*: this sphere (music).

52. *That out of three sounds etc.*: The reader may decide just what contrast with the words and colors of the other two arts is here conveyed.

RABBI BEN EZRA

Abenezra, or Ibn Ezra, was a distinguished Jewish thinker and writer of the earlier twelfth century, who travelled much and worked hard. He "evidently had no gift for prospering in worldly matters; he was too much the student. He found it difficult to provide for his family and to establish a home. He was often discouraged and poured out his grief in poetry; but he was also full of trust in God, strong in love of his people, witty,

lively, and alert in mind" (Cooke's *Browning Guide-Book*). He was a strong upholder of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Browning, who was widely read in Rabbinical lore, makes here some use of Abenezra's philosophy. But for the most part the poet is giving his own view of life at the approach of old age. He repeats ideas from preceding poems; but emphasizes, now, the *wholeness* of the individual life as seen in retrospect and in faith.—The poem may fruitfully be compared, in respect to tone and outlook, with Tennyson's "Ancient Sage" (page 397).

The main phases of the theme may be suggested as follows (numbers refer to lines):

(1) Youth and idealism.

(43) Flesh and spirit.

(73) Age and evaluation.

(115) Self and world.

(151) Self and time.

(461.) 57. *I, who — — — perfect too*: A favorite thought with Browning; see "Paracelsus" (page 403), "Saul" (page 419), etc.

62-66. *Our soul, in its rose-mesh etc.*: Living in the body, we have a *natural* yearning for the complacency of the earth and its creatures (cf. lines 18, 24): we desire to have, like them, an earthly gain proportioned to our efforts.

67-72. *Let us not always etc.*: This exhortation qualifies the thought of lines 25-30, 43-48.

76. *Thence shall I pass*: i.e. from life's struggle" (line 75) into old age.—With this stanza, compare Tennyson's "By an Evolutionist" (page 401).

81. *my adventure brave and new*: the life beyond death.

84. *indue*: put on.

100. *rage*: ardent endeavor.

(462.) 141. *So passed*: and which it therefore passed over.—With this stanza and the next, compare stanza x of the preceding poem.

151. *Potter's wheel*: See *Isaiah*, LXIV, 8; *Jeremiah*, XVIII, 1-6.

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS

Setebos was a Patagonian deity whom Shakespeare had read of in a book of

travel. In "The Tempest," Caliban twice mentions his "dam's god, Setebos" (I, 2, 372; V, 1, 261); and his idea of divinity comes out in his attitude toward Stephano, the drunken, autocratic butler. These hints excited Browning's imagination, and here he gives Caliban a modern opportunity to set forth the whole of what the subtitle calls his "natural theology in the island." Many details from that magic island reappear in the poem; but all have changed color in passing from Shakespeare's drama into Browning's dramatic monologue. This is centered, not only in one person, but in one idea, as indicated by the motto (from *Psalms*, I, 21). The aspect of human nature here given is just the opposite of that emphasized in a passage in "Paracelsus" (V, 618-619):

"So glorious is our nature, so august

Man's inborn uninstructed impulses." . . .
(463.) 1. *'Will: he will.* — Caliban's speaking of himself in the third person is a feature of his primitiveness.

5. *small eft-things:* tiny lizard-like creatures.

7. *A pompion-plant:* a wild vine of the pumpkin family.

17-19. *Because to talk* etc.: Caliban at once longs, and fears, to vex Setebos with his gibing.

20. *Prosper and Miranda:* These are the only human beings (excepting his "dam") that Caliban has so far known. See the last note on this poem, below.
(464.) 50. *pie:* magpie.

78. *for, there, see:* Caliban begins here to mould a lump of clay. — Here, and often, his imagination is like that of children at play.

79. *hoopoe:* a bird (pronunciation: hoopoo or hoopoh).

83. *grigs:* grasshoppers or crickets.
(465.) 111. *But rougher than his handiwork:* Cf. lines 59-65.

138. *'Esteemeth stars* etc.: Cf. line 27 and context.

(466.) 148. *hips:* the hard, round fruit of the wild brier.

156 *oncelot:* a little ounce (see the next note).

158. *A four-legged serpent:* Caliban's metaphor for the ounce of the pre-

ceding line, — a supple creature resembling a leopard but lower in build.

177. *orc:* a carnivorous sea-beast.

(467.) 205. *wattles:* twigs.

219-220. *All need not die* etc.: Caliban is thinking of the creatures that can get beyond his own reach.

221-240. *Those at His mercy* etc.:

Cf. lines 85-126.

254. *just:* exactly enough.

(468.) 258. *films:* wings. — Cf. lines 81-84.

268. *And never speaks* etc.: Cf. lines 17-19.

284. *A curtain o'er the world at once!* Browning doubtless has in mind the sudden storm brought on in early afternoon, by Prospero's magic, at the beginning of "The Tempest."

CONFESSIONS

Compare the mood of "Respectability" (page 434).

5. *there:* in the "vale of tears" (line 3).

8. *to:* i.e., sloping down to. — The speaker reassumes in imagination his one time standpoint at the foot of the lane, whence the house first came into view; cf. the next stanza.

(469.) 17. *terrace:* balcony (cf. line 30).

PROSPICE

Written in 1861 several months after the death of Mrs. Browning. The title means "look forward."

23. *fiend-voices:* alluding to the old belief that when the soul leaves the body fiends try to snatch it from the powers of light.

JAMES LEE'S WIFE

This poem has the same theme as "In a Year" (page 433).

Section I

(470.) 20-21. *Me, to bend above* etc.: me, for thee to bend above (as the dell over its dove, line 18) and to hold embraced (as the lake surrounds its swan, line 17).

Section VII

(470.) 7. *the doctrine*: i.e., the doctrine which the observer may learn from "This autumn morning" (lines 1-6).

10. *clear gain* etc.: i.e., a smooth and complete earthly joy (in contrast to the *gain* of line 12).—Cf. "Rabbi Ben Ezra," lines 31-36 (page 460).

EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS

Written for the painting "Orpheus and Eurydice" by Frederick Leighton. Browning puts into words the expression on Eurydice's face, as she is being led up from Hades by her husband. The condition imposed upon him was that if he turned to look at her (as he finally did) she would be caught back again among the dead, and be lost to him for good.

O LYRIC LOVE

Concerned, like the four poems that follow, with the poet's dead wife. In this superb apostrophe, while she retains her intensely *personal* meaning for her lover, he seems almost to identify her with the very spirit of human-divine love,—a spirit often treated in his previous works (e.g. "Saul," section XVIII, page 425), but here more devotionally conceived than usual. Compare sections CXXIX-CXXXI of "In Memoriam" (page 359).—The theme of the higher love is wrought into the moving story of Pompilia, Part Seventh of "The Ring and the Book."

1391. *half angel and half bird*: partly a missioned being from above, partly a spirit of poetry rising from earth.

1393. *braved the sun*: faced daily life.

1394. *Took sanctuary* etc.: had recourse to the realm of spiritual truth ("holier" than the realm of the sun).

1396-1400. *Yet human* etc.: yet so deeply human as to drop down (from "the holier blue") whenever the summons of human need came.—Allusions to Mrs. Browning's life, and to the Gospel story, are here fused in a single train of imagery.

1410. *but*: without (parallel to "except," line 1405).

1413. *so*: i.e., with lifted hand and head (line 1410). While craving the utmost, he here returns blessing for whatever dim intimations of "lyric love" have come through the cloud-barrier (lines 1415-1416) during his song.—For the imagery, cf. the next poem.

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE

(471.) 7. *But the house is narrow*: Cf. "In Memoriam," xxxv, 2 (page 331).—The confined "house" is in contrast with the ongoing "path."

11. *marks*: heeds.

12-13. *O enemy* — — — *waking man*: Cf. "In Memoriam," III, 1-4; IV, 13-16 (page 323).

15. *Thus*: i.e., by constantly having her present to his spirit, as implied in lines 1-11.

SPECULATIVE

Cf. "O Lyric Love," lines 1406-1409.

SUMMUM BONUM

The title means "The highest good."

(472.) 7. *were*: (subjunctive) could be.

EPILOGUE

Compare "Crossing the Bar" (page 403), which belongs to the same year and holds a similar position in its author's life-work.—In regard to his third stanza, Browning remarked, while reading proof: "It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the simple truth; and as it's true, it shall stand."—Not long before his death, he said to a friend: "Death, death! It is this harping on death I despise so much,—this idle and often cowardly as well as ignorant harping. Why should we not change like everything else? In fiction, in poetry, French as well as English, and, I am told, in American art and literature, the shadow of death—call it what you will, despair, negation, indifference—is upon us. But what fools who talk thus! Why, *amico mio*, you know as well as I that death is life, just as our daily, our

momentarily, dying body is none the less alive and ever recruiting new forces of existence. Without death, which is our crape-like churchyard word for change, for growth, there could be no prolongation of that which we call life. Pshaw! it is foolish to argue upon such a thing even. For myself, I deny death as an end of anything. Never say of me that I am dead" (Cook's *Browning Guide-Book*, page 306). (472.) 2. *you*: some or any loved one who will survive the speaker.

5. *Pity*: follows "Will they" (line 3).

16. *No*: answers the question of the first stanza, — to which the last stanza is designed, throughout, as a vivid contrast.

17. *the unseen*: the dead poet.

19. *Speed!*: God-speed! — With the last two lines compare "Rabbi Ben Ezra," lines 81-84 (page 461).

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

With health broken by an accident in her girlhood, Elizabeth Barrett lived a life as uneventful, she says, as that of a bird in a cage, until her marriage to Robert Browning when she was forty years old. She educated herself. "The Greeks were my demigods. . . . The love of Pope's Homer threw me into Pope on the one side, and into Greek on the other, and into Latin as a help to Greek." She worked persistently at her Greek, learned to read the Bible in Hebrew, and in time acquired a fluent reading knowledge of several modern European languages. English poetry she knew widely and intimately, including that of Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, and Tennyson. At the age of seventeen or eighteen she wrote a Poeman "Essay on Mind," and then or soon after translated the "Prometheus Bound" of Aeschylus, which she published in 1835 along with some not very promising poems of her own. Other volumes of poems, romantic in character, followed at intervals; and then she met Robert Browning. With her marriage in 1846, she entered upon a new life, in a double sense: she escaped from her

prison in London — from the sofa of an invalid and the tyranny of an abnormal father — to a happy life in contact with humanity in Florence, Italy; and as a poetess she advanced, under the awakening influence of her husband, from the tamely imitative to the vitally genuine.

This awakening of her powers began in the period of her betrothal in London, when she expressed her joyous sense of release, and expansion, and deepening, in her love sonnets, later published under the disguising title of *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850). These constitute Mrs. Browning's claim to a secure place in nineteenth-century poetry, and were never equalled by her work in Italy. *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), expressing her sympathy with the Italian cause and her admiration for Louis Napoleon, is enthusiastic but diffuse. Diffuseness, again, fatally mars the long narrative poem, successful in its day, entitled *Aurora Leigh* (1857), in which the story of a magnanimous daughter of the common folk who gives up her betrothed philanthropist, furnishes only too good an occasion for argument, preaching, and humanitarian emotionalism. In such works as these, Mrs. Browning is by turns true and fine, and loose and flat. To her intellectual power and wealth of feeling she did not bring fit imaginative governance. She lacked the dramatic vision that often shaped her husband's genius — quite similarly difficult — into brief, superb monologues. But in what Wordsworth termed "the sonnet's scanty plot of ground" she found, happily, an enforced concentration that made her utterance firm.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

The whole series of forty-four poems can be followed more appreciatively after reading the *Letters of R. B. and E. B. B.*, which were written at the same time and give the detail of the story (see the fourth paragraph of the biography of Browning, page 740, above). The distinctive and womanly feeling in these sonnets comes out against the background of the love-

poetry of Browning; review particularly the poems from "My Star" to "Two in the Campagna" (pages 430-431), and "Lyric Love" (page 470).

I. 1. *Theocritus*: the Greek-Sicilian bucolic poet of the third century B.C. The allusion is to *Idyl* xv.

8. *by turns*: alludes to a succession of troubles, including the deaths of her mother and brother (see the first paragraph of the biography, above).

VI. 1. *Go from me*: She at first refused to consider marriage, fearing that her weak state of health would be a burden upon his life.

VII. 7. *dole*: sorrow.

12. *this lute and song*: her poetry.

XIV. 7-9. *For these things* — — *unwrought so*: Cf. Browning's "In a Year," lines 9-16 (page 433).

XXII. 6-14. *Think! in mounting higher* etc.: Love, in approaching the perfect communion of heaven, might lose some of the precious personal intimacy that it wins in this "contrarious" world (line 11).— Compare Browning's "Speculative" (page 471).

DOBELL: AMERICA

A stylistic tendency that became prominent in the work of Sydney Dobell (1824-1874) and several other minor poets of the middle century drew upon them, from the witty W. E. Aytoun, the epithet "spasmodic school." Jerky and extravagant emphasis had appeared also in the two Brownings, and has since been a frequent feature in English verse. Of Dobell, Hugh Walker remarks in *The Literature of the Victorian Era* (1910): "Perhaps he held too strongly that poetry ought to be spontaneous." Brought up in an earnest religious sect founded by his grandfather and popularly called the "Free-thinking Christians," Dobell later swung his main interest to political liberty. He was very eager, like Mrs. Browning, on behalf of Italy. He felt intensely that the Crimean War (1854-1856), with England and France against Russia, was a struggle between freedom and autocracy; and he wrote the present sonnets upon

hearing rumors that the United States favored Russia.

(475.) 6. *satchelled ancestor*: reminiscent of Shakespeare's "school-boy with his satchel" (*As You Like It*, II, 7, 145).

COVENTRY PATMORE (1823-1896)

Coventry Patmore's aim in poetry was to celebrate Nuptial Love, "the more serious importance of which," he said, "had been singularly missed by most poets of all countries." Marriage, to other poets the antithesis or the conclusion of romantic love, he accepted as its crown and consummation,—in his strange language, the sacramental approach to the true "vestal fire."

Educated privately in the atmosphere of the "Cockney school" of writers (see note on Leigh Hunt, page 694, above) and guided by an unwise and sentimental father, Patmore disclosed a precocious talent for verse-writing. After a youth of ease and literary dilettantism, he was suddenly thrown, at twenty-three, on his own resources. He obtained a position as assistant in the Library of the British Museum, where he remained nearly twenty years, carrying forward at the same time his own literary projects. His first important work, *The Angel in the House* (1854-63), which sold by the thousands and made him for awhile the most popular English poet, was a series of narratives in verse with such subtitles as "The Espousals," "The Betrothal," and "Faithful Forever." The entire design was never completed. The narrative part was thin and trivial, and the style, though showing some poetic originality, was often no better than doggerel; but the poem pleased a multitude of readers, especially women, who in general admired its worst features, and found in its analysis of sentiment merely a flattering reflection of their own feelings. Thus one of the most imperious, explosive, and original persons alive became the idol of Victorian insipidity, the laureate of croquet and tea-parties.

What such readers missed in the poems, and what Landor, Tennyson, the Brownings, and Carlyle perceived, was an ex-

traordinary understanding of the psychology of sex, and a combined boldness and purity in its handling. It is in this field that parts of the work may still claim our interest. "What is not instantly observed," writes Mr. Edmund Gosse (*Coventry Patmore*, page 72), "is that to Patmore, within the pale of the mysterious sacrament of marriage, no less psychological ingenuity is possible than to Baudelaire outside it." "The Married Lover" (page 475) illustrates this particular power of Patmore's, as well as his courtly grace of phrase and real elevation of spirit.

In all three of his own marriages Patmore was very happy. With his first wife, a lady of rare beauty, graciousness, and force of character, some of his best poems, though written much later, are connected. Shortly after her death in 1862, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church, and the event marks a sharp dividing line in his poetic career. Religious by instinct from early youth, and untouched by the intellectual difficulties besetting his contemporaries (see his thrust at science in "The Two Deserts"), he now became immersed in mysticism. Feeding his mind on St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross, but disdaining all extreme forms of ascetic discipline (see the ode "To the Body"), Patmore sublimated his exaltation of the human love of man and woman into an expression of the mystic union of the soul with God. His book of odes, called *The Unknown Eros* (1877), is dominated by this conception, and is as different as possible, in its austerity of style, from the facile sentimentality of *The Angel in the House*. The more esoteric of these odes have been highly praised in certain select literary and religious circles, and powerfully influenced at least one Catholic poet, Francis Thompson; other Catholics, including Cardinal Newman, found their point of view distasteful. It is probably in the handling of purely human relationships or of the simpler phases of religious emotion that Patmore's fineness of feeling and piercing pathos are best displayed (e.g., "The Toys," page 475; also "The Azalea" and "The Departure.") The verse-form, the so-called "false Pindaric" ode, is somewhat reminiscent of

Cowley and other seventeenth-century poets and, more significantly, anticipates the present-day tendency toward metrical freedom.

THE MARRIED LOVER

See the third paragraph of the biography, above.

(475.) 2. *vestal*: chaste.

5-6. *such That* etc.: completed by "Thus she" etc. (line 13).

13-16. *Thus she* — — — *state put by*: In this felicitous way, she fosters in her husband a love so high that he never wrongly fancies the distance bridged between himself and her, or her dignity laid aside.

21. *Not with her least consent of will*: (modifying "Remind," line 20) i.e., not with the slightest intention of reminding him of his inferiority.

27. *hopeless snows*: unapproachable purity (on a height beyond).

THE TOYS

An account of this poem and of Patmore's relations with his own children is given in E. Gosse's *Coventry Patmore*, pages 98-101. — Is the parallel drawn in the poem a true one?

(476.) 3. *the seventh time*: see *Matthew*, XVIII, 21-22.

17. *abraded by the beach*: worn down by the surf and sand.

TENNYSON-TURNER: LETTY'S GLOBE

In his youth Charles Tennyson (1808-1879) — who later added the name Turner for family reasons — coöperated with Alfred in *Poems by Two Brothers* (see the first paragraph of the Tennyson biography, page 716, above). But afterwards he found his chief milieu in a form not suited to the genius of his brother, — the sonnet. At his best, as in the present example, he does not try for an elevation beyond his reach. This harmonious "conceit" of childhood may be read as a complement — or antithesis — of the preceding poem.

THACKERAY: AT THE CHURCH GATE

The muse of William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) is more voluminous, and less incisive, in such humorous pieces as the "Ballad of Bouillabaisse." But quite often it reveals, in the midst of fun or satire, simple-hearted adorations like that of the present lover, in his quick little monodrama. This lover comes from the same Thackerayan region as Dobbin adoring his Amelia in the midst of "Vanity Fair" (1848); and the reader should overhear him with the same kind of smile.

DOYLE: THE EPICUREAN

A graduate of Oxford University, Sir Francis Hastings Doyle (1810-1888) held the Professorship of Poetry there (1867-1877) as successor to Matthew Arnold. He published "The Return of the Guards and Other Poems" in 1866, and collected the greater part of his verse into a single volume in 1883. Coming of a family of soldiers, he is chiefly known for his vigorous ballad-like pieces, notably "The Private of the Buffs." But no doubt the present poem is closer to his personal outlook.

(477.) 8. *mete*: measure.

FITZGERALD AND OMAR

In his adaptation of the *Rubaiyat*, Fitzgerald rendered the thought of an Oriental sage in a form so happily combining the spirit of the original with the genius of the English language that we scarcely think of the poem as exotic to our literature.

OMAR KHAYYAM (c. 1050-1123?)

Shortly before the date of the Norman conquest of England, Persia had been conquered by a Turkish dynasty, the Seljuks, who, though despotic and sometimes cruel, showed themselves friendly to learning. The period of their supremacy is the second golden age of Persian literature. In Nishapur, at the court of the Sultan Alp

Arslan (1063-1072), lived for some years Omar Khayyam, a profound scholar in philosophy and science, and the foremost mathematician of his time. The name Khayyam means "tent-maker;" it may have signified his father's occupation, or it may simply have been hereditary, like "Hunter" or "Smith" today. On the death of Alp Arslan, Omar moved, apparently, to the new Sultan's capital at Merv, where he became astronomer royal to the court and with seven other scientists collaborated in a reform of the calendar (see stanza LVII, page 482). He wrote a monograph on the extraction of square and cube roots, another on "Some Difficulties of Euclid's Definitions," three books on natural science, and three on metaphysics. To the Occident he is best known by his *rubaiyat*, or "quatrains," although in his own country these have never been accounted equal to the lyrics of Hafiz and others. Of Omar's personality we know little. The early account of him as unsocial and inhospitable may be without foundation. On the other hand, owing to the impossibility of establishing exactly what quatrains are of his authorship, later scholars would hardly go so far as Fitzgerald, who says: "And this, I think, especially distinguishes Omar . . . from all other Persian poets: that, whereas with them the poet is lost in his song, the man in allegory and abstraction, we seem to have the man—the *bon-homme*—Omar himself, with all his humours and passions, as frankly before us as if we were really at table with him, after the wine had gone round."

Orthodox Mohammedanism, the official religion of the court and society in which Omar lived, is strictly doctrinal and monotheistic; and while its intellectual sway had been less complete in Persia than in other Eastern countries, still the freedom of speculation which Omar's work evinces marked him out as a man of heretical opinions. In reality, many of the Sufis, with whose writings the *rubaiyat* of Omar have interesting relations, were as unorthodox as he, their poems often implying a pantheistic view inconsistent with monotheism; but they accorded a formal recognition to Islam, as Omar was too honest to do.

Sufism, which grew up within the fold

of Islam and which is still very active in the Orient, is not a doctrine or a creed; it may be roughly described as a mystical "Way of Life," recommending certain devotional practices and having as its goal the devotee's union with the Divine. The Sufi poets employed an elaborate system of highly sensuous symbolism, according to which "the beloved" is God, the curl on the beloved's forehead is the transient charm which partially hides His face, wine is the ecstasy of man at the thought of reunion with the Beloved, and so on. Like other mystical cults, Sufism had doubtless its spiritually-minded adherents; but the temptations of a type of religion which so subtly interwove the carnal and the spiritual are obvious. No such esoteric meanings are to be read into Omar's verses. At times, like the Sufis, he has a pantheistic strain; but when he speaks of wine, he means wine, — or at most mere earthly joy and vitality. There is no ambiguity in his pronouncement of the one thing certain: this life flies. Fitzgerald characterized the underlying thought of the Persian, in sending a copy of the translation to a friend: "It is a desperate sort of thing, unfortunately at the bottom of all men's minds; but made music of."

EDWARD FITZGERALD (1809-1883)

In the refined hedonism of the Persian poet certain important sections of later nineteenth century thought found their own voice. The agnosticism which has its imprint on so much of Clough's and Arnold's verse left for certain minds no escape from a completely hedonistic philosophy. Tennyson struggled toward and attained a more affirmative faith, but he felt strongly the dissolving influence of the skepticism about him; the younger man's lyric in "The Ancient Sage" (page 397), for example, which draws the old teacher's rebuke, is nearly at one with Omar. The finely tempered Epicureanism of Walter Pater is another expression of the same tendency, which was later to be carried further by the languid contemporaries of Oscar Wilde. The result was a drawing away of certain highly gifted writers from

the central stream of English life and thought, with its characteristic vigor and its moralistic bent.

Fitzgerald, one feels, whatever age he had lived in, would have been attracted by one or another form of Epicureanism. "A lonely, shy, kind-hearted man," as Carlyle described him, endowed with critical penetration and a delicate feeling for style, he lived a simple country life in Suffolk, working quietly on various unimportant translations, which he published anonymously, writing affectionate and humorous letters to friends whom he seldom made an effort to see, and gradually losing the impetus toward substantial literary achievement. It is interesting to note that Tennyson's maturer work disappointed him, while he continued to praise the earlier poems such as "The Lotos-Eaters." In middle life Fitzgerald married a worthy but conventional lady, whose ideas and habits proved so incompatible with his own that, after a short experience of matrimony, they separated, without ill-feeling on either side. But the life of "Old Fitz," as his familiars called him, was rich in friendships — with the Tennysons, Spedding, Thackeray, Professor Cowell, Fanny Kemble, and others. Besides his *Letters*, he left one lasting memorial of his pre-eminent literary gifts, his version of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam.

The first edition, containing only 75 stanzas, was published in 1859. In three subsequent editions Fitzgerald added, omitted, and transposed quatrains, and amended phrases, — nearly always to advantage. The present text is that of the fourth edition.

The precise relationship between the original and the paraphrase is a complicated matter. Of the 1200 extant quatrains ascribed to Omar, it is uncertain how many were really written by him. In the Persian, the stanzas consist each of four lines of equal, though varied, prosody; sometimes all rhyming, but oftener (as in the English version) the third line a blank. The quatrains are arranged according to an arbitrary alphabetical system; each one constituting an independent epigrammatic poem, though an underlying kinship of thought gives a sort of unity. Fitzgerald

has combined stanzas, expanded or transposed metaphors, has (rarely) introduced material from other Persian poets, and has effected a sequence which gives organic unity. The reader should note the progress from the solicitations of spring in the opening part, through the brooding upon the transitoriness of earthly beauty and the ironical refutation of the claims of philosophy, to the vivid and humorous dialogue of the earthen pots, and the closing stanzas with their lyrical reiteration of the main theme. Thus the work is a poetic paraphrase rather than a translation. Something of the tender melancholy derives from Fitzgerald; but on the whole, according to Orientalists, he has caught with surprising exactness the spirit of his original.

RUBAIYAT

(477.) 1-4. *Wake! For the Sun* etc.: In the first edition, this stanza has the following form (the first two lines referring to the custom of flinging a stone into a bowl as signal to mount horse):

"Awake! for Morning in the bowl of Night
Has flung the stone that puts the Stars to flight:
And lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultán's turret in a noose of light."

5. *the phantom of false morning*: the Eastern phenomenon of the "false dawn," i.e., a transient light in the horizon about an hour before daybreak.

13. *New Year*: beginning with the vernal equinox (March 21).

15-16. *the white hand* — — — *Puts out*: The miracle of the white blossoming of the trees begins again. — For the image, see *Exodus*, iv, 6, and context, in the Revised Version.

16. *suspires*: breathes. According to the Persians, Jesus' healing power resided in his breath. — For the natural phenomenon, cf. "Adonais," stanza xix (page 221).

17. *Iram*: an ancient royal garden, now buried in Arabian sands.

18. *Jamshyd's sev'n-ringed cup*:

Jamshyd, a legendary king of Persia, had a divining cup that symbolized the seven heavens, seven planets, etc.

19. *But still* — — — *the vine*: The wine still sparkles with its precious red (though priceless cups of famous kings be gone).

(478.) 22. *Pehlevi*: the old literary language of Persia, remaining the same in contrast with the changing spoken language. — So the nightingale's spring song continues, though a great poet-king is long silent (line 21).

24. *sallow cheek*: For the Oriental tale of the nightingale and the rose, see the note to "Epipsychidion," lines 9-12, page 690, above.

29. *Naishápúr*: or Nishapur. See the beginning of the Omar biography, above.

39. *Rustum*: the great mythical warrior of Persia; he performed seven famous labors like the twelve of Hercules. *Zál* was his father and *Kaikhosrú* (line 38) his sovereign.

40. *Hátim*: a type of Oriental generosity.

44. *Máhmúd*: Mahmud the Great, who flourished a century before Omar's time; the first ruler of Persia to take the title of sultan. — Perhaps stanzas such as xi-xvii fostered the tradition that Omar, in his devotion to the simple life, refused to accept title or office from a boyhood friend, Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had become Vizier. It is now believed that the story of the boyhood friendship is apocryphal, and that Omar's patron was other than Nizam.

50. *the Prophet*: Mahomet.

51. *cash*: This excludes the "glories of this world" (line 49) as well as Paradise.

56. *its treasure*: "the rose's golden centre" (Fitzgerald).

57. *the golden grain*: wealth. — The image is carried on in *aureate earth* (line 59).

65. *Caravanserai*: inn. — With the whole stanza, cf. lines 6-12.

(479.) 71. *Bahrám*: a figure in Persian legend. One of his feats was lassoing the wild ass.

75-76. *That every hyacinth* etc.:

alluding to "hyacinthine locks" (as in "Paradise Lost," IV, 301).

(479.) 99. *A Muezzin*: a Mohammedan summoner to prayer.

112-120. *I came like water* etc.: Cf. the main image and idea of the preceding poem (page 477).

(480.) 119. *this forbidden wine*: According to orthodox Mahometanism, the use of wine is one of the twelve capital sins.

121-122. *through the Seventh Gate* etc.: Saturn was Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

127. *ME and THEE*: "some individual Existence or Personality distinct from the Whole" (Fitzgerald).

133-136. *Then of the THEE in ME* etc.: Then he strove, prayerfully, for some glimpse of divine personality working in the depths of his own spirit. But only Nature answered, saying: "There is nothing, even within yourself, but my impersonal life." — Contrast "In Memoriam," CXXIV, CXXXI (pages 358, 360).

149. *such a story*: Cf. "Rabbi Ben Ezra," line 151 ff. (page 462) and the note.

153. *And not a drop* etc.: alluding to the Oriental custom of throwing a little wine on the ground before drinking.

(481.) 173. *the Soul*: here, almost equivalent to "Life;" cf. lines 181-184, 200-208. — In this part of the poem is given the pantheistic view which Omar shared with other intellectuals of his day: a belief in a single impersonal Life — of which individuals are but transient manifestations — running through man and nature.

179. *Ferrâsh*: attendant.

183. *Sâkî*: wine-bearer.

198. *Alif*: the letter A, often represented by a slight stroke like an apostrophe.

203. *from Mâh to Mâhi*: from fish to moon.

205-206. *then back — — of darkness*: then plunging back again behind the veil of darkness (see line 126).

(482.) 221-224. *For "IS" and "IS NOT"* etc.: a jesting reference to his scientific studies. — "He very likely takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of Sense above that of the Intellect, in which he must have taken

great delight although it failed to answer the Questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested" (Fitzgerald).

225-226. *my Computations*: See the first paragraph of the Omar biography, above.

234. *The two-and-seventy jarring sects*: It was supposed that there were seventy-two religions in the world.

237-240. *The mighty Mahmûd* etc.: a punning allusion to Mahmûd's conquest of India, with its dark-faced and non-Mahometan peoples. See the note to line 44, above.

(483.) 269-272. *a moving row* etc.: A certain festive lantern used in the Orient has a cylindrical interior "painted with various figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the lighted candle within" (Fitzgerald). — Cf. lines 206-208.

277-280. *The ball* etc.: alluding to polo, which originated in Persia.

299. *Parwîn and Mushtari*: the Pleiads and Jupiter.

302. *Dervish*: a Mohammedan monk; the dervishes often utter vociferous cries to Allah (line 304).

309. *provoke*: call forth.

(484.) 314. *dross-allayed*: alloyed with dross.

317. *gin*: snare.

326. *Ramazân*: the Mohammedan fasting month; during which no food or drink may be taken between dawn and sunset.

346. *Sûfi*: a Mohammedan mystic, with a strong pantheistic strain. — The Persian Sufis, while formally adhering, unlike Omar, to Islam, were inclined to ambiguous doctrine and sensual conduct, for which they were ridiculed by him. See the biography, above.

358. *The little Moon* etc.: The new moon marking the close of Ramazân (see note to line 326, above) "is looked for with the utmost anxiety, and hailed with acclamation: then it is that the Porter's knot may be heard — toward the cellar" (Fitzgerald). — The "Porter's shoulder-knot" (line 360) was a strap in which the jars were strung.

(485.) 363-364. *And lay me — — gar-*

den-side: According to tradition, one of Omar's pupils related the following:—"I often used to hold conversations with my teacher, Omar Khayyám, in a garden; and one day he said to me, 'My tomb shall be in a spot where the north wind may scatter roses over it.' . . . Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishápúr, I went to his final resting-place, and lo! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so as the stone was hidden under them."

(485.) 369. *the Idols:* his Wine and his Wine-poetry, as implied in the rest of the stanza. See note to line 119, above.

373. *repentance:* See line 26, and the note to line 119, above.—Omar's vows of repentance may be regarded as more or less of a poetic fiction. Fitzgerald says he was probably "moderate" in his use of wine and "bragged more than he drank of it, in very defiance." In lines 369-380 he is ironically looking at himself from the standpoint of conventional Mohammedan society.

401. *Sákí:* See lines 164, 183.

405. *Taman:* The End.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

(1819-1861)

Clough is commonly thought of, along with Matthew Arnold, as a poet of doubt; more exactly, however, his distinction is his unworldly integrity. With a deep sense for the "unknown because divine" (in his own phrase), he was also unflinchingly honest in his facing of experience. This twofold spirit was developed in him early, through reflective reading, and through the influence of the great head master of his school, Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby. At Rugby, Clough not only excelled in football and swimming (a true Englishman, he ever remained fond of outdoor activity), but received the highest scholastic honor—the Balliol scholarship at Oxford.

When Clough went up to Oxford in 1837, the University was profoundly stirred by the "Oxford Movement" (see the note introductory to Newman, page

715), and for a time his religious nature felt itself drawn by the strong currents of thought and spiritual feeling that were revitalizing a moribund faith. More and more, however, he asserted his independence, embarking upon a course of solitary skepticism which he was never afterward to abandon. Failing to fulfill his scholarly promise, he disappointed his friends, including Dr. Arnold; but "The object of honors," he said, "is to make men read and not to make them distinguished." Holding this view, he worked hard, not for examinations, but for self-discipline, leading a life of Spartan austerity (passing a whole winter without a fire) and seeking, with all deliberation, truly to possess his mind and character.

In 1843 Clough was appointed tutor at Oriel College, Oxford. Inconspicuous in the University because of his intellectual aloofness, he became the object of affectionate admiration within his college. Devoted to teaching, expert in his knowledge of the classical civilizations, he saw a pleasant and useful career before him. But beneath the uneventful external life, an intense inner life was shaping his convictions, until, after a few years, he definitely felt that he was in a false position, out of sympathy with the Anglican institution of which he was a member, hindered in his instinct for fearless expression. Accordingly, in 1848, after long brooding, he resigned his tutorship and with it his means of support. "When Clough left Oxford," wrote his American admirer Charles Eliot Norton, "he had conquered the world. . . . Whatever might become of him, whatever he might become, his life was a success such as scarcely one man in a generation achieves."

Loving the truth even more than he loved Oxford and its beautiful life, he never afterward found permanently congenial work. For two years he was head of University Hall, London, an unsectarian institution in which he nevertheless felt the pressure of conventional opinion. For a year, 1852-53, he lived at Cambridge, Massachusetts, warmly welcomed by the literary society centered there and at Concord. Returning to England, he entered the public service in the Educa-

tion Office, which was to engage most of his time for the eight years that remained to him. He married felicitously. Outwardly, his life continued to belie the promise of his early years; but he held the esteem of many of the best minds of his time, and his verse is a fine white flame in the poetry of the nineteenth century.

IN A LECTURE-ROOM

Written at Oxford before Clough became a don at Oriel, these lines contain something of Newman's anti-rationalism. Progress toward "the Eternal Shore" cannot be made by "labor at the dull mechanic oar," i.e., by mere logic. But the poem does not offer as an alternative Newman's dogmatism—what does it offer?

HOW OFTEN SIT I

One of ten poems grouped under a title ("Blank Misgivings," etc.) taken from Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," stanza ix (page 42).—Does Clough here suggest any "intimations?"

QUA CURSUM VENTUS

The title means: "where the wind [directs] their course."

AMOURS DE VOYAGE

PROEM OF CANTO FIRST

(487.) 3. *to a land* etc.: Italy, where Clough spent a long holiday before undertaking his duties at University Hall, London. Clough's philosophy of travel, as here expressed, is similar to his friend Emerson's: "Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places . . . I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from." . . . "The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home." ("Self-Reliance.")

FROM CANTO FIRST

39. *Monte Testaccio*: a mound, above the Tiber, composed, as the name in-

dicates, of broken pottery, left there when wine and oil were unpacked at the Emporium.

45. *Coliseum*: See Byron's treatment of this (page 158).—Contrast Clough's mood with that of "Childe Harold."

PROEM OF CANTO SECOND

12. *brings him in arms*: The reference is to the French, besieging Rome at the time of Clough's visit.

DIPSYCHUS

PART SECOND, SCENE II

Underlying the first of these two lyrics is a perception of the spiritual unity of mankind, enjoining sympathy for "others;" underlying the second, a perception of the spiritual potentiality of the individual, enjoining self-reliance.

EASTER DAY

This poem and the following express the questionings of a modern mind in the age of the "higher criticism" of the Bible and of Strauss's epochal *Life of Jesus* (*Leben Jesu*, 1835, translated by George Eliot about three years before these poems were written). The first poem accepts the criticism which human reason makes of miracle. The second poem, a kind of epilogue to the first, asserts that, while the old unquestioning faith is now impossible, faith in the reality and supremacy of the good is still possible. In this sense, Christ still lives. Which of the two moods—that of disillusionment and that of faith in "the true creed"—is the stronger?

1. *great sinful streets*: implying the failure of Christianity.

(489.) 25. *one or more great angels*: See *Matthew*, xxviii, 5; *Mark*, xvi, 5; *Luke*, xxiv, 4; *John*, xx, 12.

28. *appeared to Peter or the Ten*: See *Luke*, xxiv, 34, 36-43; *John*, xx, 19-25.

29. *to blind Saul*: See *Acts*, ix, 1-9; *Galatians*, i, 11-17.

30. *an after Gospel and late Creed*: i.e., developed by the imagination of the early Church long after Christ's death,—

according to one theory of the "higher criticism." The other theory,—that the disciples in their excitement imagined they saw him immediately after his death,—is alluded to in the text.

(489.) 35. *Emmaüs inn . . . Capernaum's Lake*: See *Luke*, xxiv, 13-35; *John*, xxi, 1-24.

59. *the one sad Gospel that is true*: See the note to line 30, above.

(490.) 124-125. *impossible birth* — — — *only mother earth*: the miraculous birth of the Christ in contrast with the human birth of Jesus. The idea of the context is that "pleading eyes" (line 121) and "strong desire" (line 122) cannot create a divine Person for humanity to draw toward and rest in, cannot alter the fact that Jesus was born, as all men are born, of mother Earth.

138. *Gardener nor other*: See *John*, xx, 15. The allusion is continued in the next line.

146-148. *Is He not risen?*: Observe that the plain-spoken denial in all the preceding stanzas here shifts into the interrogative mood; and this, while providing a final summit of feeling, also prepares the way for the answering poem that follows.

EASTER DAY, II

(491.) 6. *Another voice*: What is the voice, and what was the first voice in the inner debate?

AH! YET CONSIDER IT AGAIN!

It was not for Clough, an apt pupil of a great historian and churchman, Dr. Arnold, and a true son of tradition-loving Oxford in the days of the religious revival led by Newman, to assume that "the new" (line 2) was true because it was new, and that the "old thought," the costly earnings of two thousands of years of human experience, should be discarded without being considered again and again. His own course is not that of "the great world" (line 13), which lives only contemporaneously, changing its truth from age to age,—neither retaining the old truth nor even expressly quitting it, but heed-

lessly accepting the partial truth of the day that is.

SEHNSUCHT

The German title may be translated "Ardent Desire." The topic is the mystery of the flux of feeling, controlled by the wise by means of intelligence and the moral consciousness, but retaining its enigmatical origin and meaning. Whence our vague desires? And what are they really? In the great poetic revival early in the century, *Sehnsucht* was welcomed and cultivated in a faith more or less blind. By the reflective and less spontaneous Victorians, and notably by the questioning Clough and Arnold, it was subjected to an earnest criticism. (Browning, however, was different: what was his view?) The present poem should recall, by way of contrast, certain verses from the early century,—e.g., in Wordsworth's "Expostulation and Reply" and "The Tables Turned" (pages 5-6).

(492.) 17. *from the vulgar ground*: Do our fluctuant emotions, he means, spring from our fleshly bond with nature, or have they a supernal origin (the "seats of bliss" in line 14)? Observe the answer to this question provided in the closing stanzas.

SONGS IN ABSENCE

These lyrics, written by Clough either during his voyage to America or during his American residence, were addressed to the lady who became his wife. As love poems, they are strikingly unlike the fresh and passionate outpourings of the more romantic lovers of the early years of the century. Here are no surging emotions and cloudlike bowers of bliss,—but a quiet, reflective forging of a relation between love and character and immortal personality. It is typical of Clough that many of these finely-knit meditations should be stated as questions.

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH

Life is to be faced, not in disillusioned hopelessness, but in courageous endurance,

and with a sense of the *whole* human struggle, of which our individual efforts form part. Note how the idea of the poem is carried through the three symbols: the battle, the sea-waves, the climbing sun.

HOPE EVERMORE AND BELIEVE

(494.) 1-2. *e'en as thy thought* — — — *thou see'st*: The world we live in is the world shaped by our minds; the world is plastic to our intelligence and will. To the courageous mind, life is something to be invaded and conquered (lines 7-10).

16. *the Duty to do*: The essence of living is action, labor; not materialistic labor (line 15), but labor for the joy of fulfilling our nature — "the joy of the deed" (line 16) in the *higher* "volition and action" (line 17). With spiritual purpose ("With the great girdle of God," line 18) we may invade and conquer and encompass this world, this life, in which we find ourselves placed.

QUI LABORAT, ORAT

Here the thought of the two preceding poems is carried to a higher plane, suggested by the title: "Who Labors, Prays." By work — ethical work, moral strenuousness — we humbly move toward the divine source of life. The soul, of its own nature, knows God, who reveals Himself aright in hours of moral crisis (lines 3-4), though He must remain, in our finite *minds*, vague and ineffable (lines 11-12).

ὕμνος ἀνυμνος

Vague and ineffable, "unknown because divine" (line 10), the Source of our light and leading must remain. With our earthly love of the definite, we would fain give shape to our sense of the divine, describe the light that inspires, report the high word that comes to us; but the Inconceivable and Inexpressible baulks our fondest efforts. All that we know is that the divine, or rather an image of the divine, is enshrined in the human spirit, in our heart of hearts. With that we must be content, nor seek to draw it out of the

temple (literally "profane" it) into the light of common day. The paradoxes and defeats resulting from the attempt to relate ourselves through definite forms with the divine, are also suggested by the title of the poem — "A Hymn Unsung," or "A Hymn But Not a Hymn."

(495.) 29-32. *Nor say, nor yet deny* etc.: Cf. the indecisive drift of certain passages in the two "Easter Day" poems (page 488).

35-40. *at least in eyes* etc.: I will not ask even to *feel* the divine presence in the shrine of my human soul and heart, *if* the divine manifests itself in the conduct of life, — the life I share with others, — directing our intelligence, giving us power to act, guiding our judgment. — Thus the poet returns toward the idea of the preceding poem.

ALL IS WELL

In this poem, as in the preceding ("With Whom is No Variableness," page 496), the poet concludes with equanimity, but not with Browning's personal optimism, that all is well with the world. If we perish, still Truth endures unchanging. If we are ignorant of our destiny; we must have faith as the vessel sails on. And when pangs of doubt beset us, we must forget them in sleep and, waking, "work again" (line 5), lending our energies to the divine purpose. Cf. "Qui Laborat, Orat" (page 495).

IN A LONDON SQUARE

Here the onward-going vessel that serves as a symbol in the preceding poem is replaced with the appointed march of the seasons.

(496.) 1. *plane*: the plane-tree, common in London.

8. *Be still, contain thyself, and bear*: This line phrases summarily the stoical spirit of Clough.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

Writing to his mother in 1869, when his poetry had not won the public recognition it has since received, Arnold asserted that

it best represented "the main movement of mind" in his time. "It might be fairly urged," he said, "that I have less poetical sentiment than Tennyson, and less intellectual vigor and abundance than Browning; yet, because I have perhaps more of a fusion of the two than either of them, and have more regularly applied that fusion to the main line of modern development, I am likely enough to have my turn, as they have had theirs." He has had his turn, not as a poet equal to Tennyson and Browning (a position that he did not claim), but as an outstanding if not the "best" representative in poetry of the "main movement of mind" in the third quarter of the century. The trend of that period was intellectual. As Arnold himself pointed out in his essays, the poetry of the earlier nineteenth century had been relatively wanting in substance; splendid in energy and aspiration, the "Romantic" poets from Wordsworth to Keats really did not think enough, did not know enough. The Oxford Movement in the second quarter of the century, again, despite its profound sense of the needs of the human spirit, seemed to turn its back to the triumphing advance of reason. Both Tennyson and Browning, however, contributed largely to the intellectual solidity of poetry, and so prepared a way for writers like Clough and Arnold, whose verse, while it is too uniformly reflective and speculative, for that very reason serves as a clear mirror of the *mind* of the age in which it was produced. It was an age of science (Darwin's *Origin of Species* appeared in the middle of Arnold's poetic period) and of the scientific mind, observant, exploratory, logical. This is the mind of Arnold, or, rather, the form and habit of his mind. For, while accepting the current *mode* of thought, Arnold infused in it much of the best feeling and thought of the past. Alien from the Oxford movement, he nevertheless manifests its backward regard. He is far from being a mere advocate of reason, for his mind lived in the processes of history, seeking light and discipline in racial experience; and finding it, especially, in the Bible and the institutional life of the church, on the one hand, and in the beauty

and harmony of the ancient Greek civilization on the other. Assured that the claims of reason must be met, he was equally assured that the apparently divergent claims of imagination, of feeling, of the moral sense must also be met. He was clear-sighted enough to know that his own attempt to reconcile them must be premature; but dealing with the highest matters in the spirit of the judge, he admirably stated the problem.

Arnold's intellectual growth, even more than Clough's shows the influence of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, — his father. Through that earnest Puritan and sound classical scholar, Arnold was early brought into vital contact with the two great traditions, Christian and classical, that were to provide most of the substance of his thought. They were both still regnant at Oxford, whither he proceeded in 1841, having won, like Clough four years earlier, a scholarship at Balliol College; and after graduation he was elected, like Clough, to an Oriel fellowship. After a short period of teaching at Rugby, and a brief term of service as secretary to Lord Lansdowne, the Liberal leader, he became in 1851 an Inspector of Schools. This position he held for virtually the remainder of his life, more than three decades, visiting schools in England and on the Continent, working hard and conscientiously in an occupation that, whatever its importance, seems in his case to have meant a deplorable misdirection of energies, under the plain need of a livelihood. His family and social life, at the same time, was peculiarly gracious.

What lay in him of higher powers, we may infer from his poems, his critical essays (mainly the product of his professorship of poetry at Oxford, which he held for ten years), and his books in criticism of society and religion. Of all of these, save perhaps his poems, it may be said that, excellent as they are, they would have been better had he been less hampered by a body-and-mind wearying routine. As for the poems, they were largely the work of his youth, and his last volume appeared in 1867. Whatever the causes — diminishing emotion and imagination, the growth of his critical powers, absorption in the problems of his age, public service in

the cause of education — the fact is plain that Arnold at length abandoned the craft of the poet; returning to it only occasionally, as if for the expression of a part of his nature that, while suffering neglect, could never die.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

This poem suffices to show that Arnold could give beautiful shape to material with only the slightest intellectual content. His material in this case — an old legend that may be found in the ballads of many nations — suggests the magically indefinite treatment that it might have received at the hands of the author of the "Ancient Mariner," or of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," or of "The Lady of Shalott." But Arnold, with his leaning toward classical art, avoids the indefinite; he desires to see the thing as it plainly is — to see and present his narrative, his characters, his setting, faithfully and simply, without admixture of highly colored images, and of complex, elusive turns of phrase and feeling. And pictorial though his handling is, he seeks to fuse all the elements of the picture with the character of the Merman and his children. These mythical beings, while they remain alien from humanity, are themselves humanized, conceived with such emotions — such attachments, such pathetic experience — as will serve to bring them within the range of human sympathy. The conclusion of the poem, where the tender emotion is represented by shorter lines, has a particularly captivating melody.

QUIET WORK

Arnold's carefully controlled poetic energy did not require the concentrating limits of the sonnet, but found that form, along with ode and elegy, a congenial mode of expression. — This sonnet and the one that follows give the essentials of his philosophy of nature. They contain his answer to the question brought to the foreground of our modern consciousness by Wordsworth and his contemporaries — the question of the relation of man and nature. Deeply responsive to Wordsworth, as he shows in his poems and in his essay on

Wordsworth in *Essays in Criticism* (which the student of Arnold should not fail to read), he is a disciple with a difference. And the difference is fundamental.

The title of the present sonnet phrases the "two duties" of line 3. The union of the two may have been suggested by Goethe's well-known precept: "Ohne Hast ohne Rast" (Without haste, without rest.). (498.) 11. *thy sleepless ministers move on:* the active principles in nature.

IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

Here, retaining (line 4) the moral lesson of quiet work, Arnold views at large man's relation to nature, emphasizing the differences. To Wordsworth, nature had been "the soul Of all my moral being" ("Tintern Abbey," lines 110-111, page 8). To Arnold, however, nature is not parallel to man, much less equivalent to man. A great deal may be learned from her quiet orderliness, in our age of haste and restlessness; but there is a point where she ends and human nature passes beyond. Her being is in man, but there is more in man, — a moral potentiality of which she knows nothing, and upon which depends his attainment of his highest good. The sentimental devotees of nature (many of whom in the middle century were professed Wordsworthians) forget this; falsely enamoured of nature, they are really her slaves (line 14). Originally the sonnet was inscribed "To an Independent Preacher, who preached that we should be 'in Harmony with Nature.'"

TO A FRIEND

Toward the attainment of the good, Arnold's main help or prop was the record of profound human experience. This may be seen by a mere glance at his *Note-Books*, in which he collected sayings of sages and moralists, classical and Christian, ancient and modern. In the present sonnet he selects three favorite sources of his wisdom.

(499.) 2-4. *the old man — — — though blind:* Homer. In a note Arnold says that the name Europe, literally "the wide prospect," "probably describes the appearance

of the European coast to the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor opposite"; and that the name Asia, literally "marshy," was suggested to the Greeks by "the muddy fens of the rivers of Asia Minor."—Tmolus hill is a mountain range near Smyrna, one of the cities that claimed to be the birthplace of blind Homer.

(499.) 6-8. *that halting slave* — — — *shamed him*: Epictetus, the great, lame Roman philosopher, who had been a slave. When Vespasian's son Domitian exiled the philosophers from Rome in 89 A.D., he proceeded to Nicopolis. His pupil Arrian compiled the *Discourses* of Stoical doctrine that Arnold loved; their tone is vigorous and cheerful.

9-14. *My special thanks* — — — *and its child*: Sophocles; the last, and in Arnold's view the greatest, of the three chief Athenian dramatists, notable for his ideal harmony. He composed dramas for some sixty years, writing "Oedipus at Colonus" in his ninetieth year (line 10). He was a native of Colonus (line 14). The frequently quoted twelfth line of the sonnet, a succinct expression of the spirit of Arnold's own outlook on the world, claims rather too much for the master of tragedy, whose vision was steady but perhaps scarcely whole.

SHAKESPEARE

3-8. *the loftiest hill* — — — *mortality*: Precisely what does this comparison express as to the nature of Shakespeare's genius? Is the figure a good one?

10. *Self-schooled* etc.: The line indicates (with poetic heightening of Shakespeare's self-consciousness) Shakespeare's development and mastery of himself. Shakespeare, as Arnold sees him, is not the magnificently barbarous poet of the eighteenth-century view, nor the instinctive, unerring poet venerated by Coleridge and other romanticists.

TO A REPUBLICAN FRIEND, 1848

In 1848, a year of revolutions in Europe, and the year of the proclamation of the Second Republic in France, the social problems brought forward by the earlier French Revolution were presented to the

minds of thinking men with fresh vividness. These two sonnets state Arnold's thought during the crisis, and also his prevailing view of society. Complementary to each other, the one showing the sound element in liberalism, the other the sound element in conservatism, they indicate the conflict in the poet's mind; and through their arrangement — conservatism saying the last word — they manifest the issue of that conflict. — For Arnold's view of the English political parties — the Conservatives, with their mental inflexibility, and the Liberals, especially the radical Liberals, with their devotion to abstract rights and their materialistic objects — the reader should turn to the fine prose work, *Culture and Anarchy*, 1869.

RELIGIOUS ISOLATION

(500.) 5. *Too fearful or too fond to play alone*: Children may be forgiven (line 1) if, too fearful or too foolish to play alone, they seek to win the interest of the abstracted adult standing by. So we adults — as Arnold pursues the idea — are childishly fearful or foolish if we look to find in nature the same "holy secret" (line 9), the same "law" (line 12), that dwells in man.

14. *Live by thy light, and Earth will live by hers*: With this thought, which sums up the poem, compare Emerson's lines:

"There are two laws discrete,
Not reconciled, —
Law for man, and law for thing."

MEMORIAL VERSES

For Arnold, the death of Wordsworth in 1850 was a momentous event. As a boy he had spent many holidays at his father's place on the Rotha stream near Grasmere, where Wordsworth lived. Early attached to that lovely country, he was later deeply stirred by the poetry of this man of quiet joy among so many melancholy contemporary poets. He acknowledged his debt in an essay on Wordsworth (see the note under "Quiet Work," above); in his selection of Wordsworth's poems, done with a fine critical sense; and in these "Memorial Verses."

(500.) 6. *Byron's* — — — *death*: When a youth, Arnold responded, like the boy Tennyson, to the poetic passion of Byron; and he ever retained an interest in characters who, like Byron, expressed the disillusionment of the times. On the other hand, in his late essay on Byron, he quoted approvingly Goethe's remark that "the moment he begins to reflect he is a child," a judgment more mildly stated in line 8 of this poem.

15. *Goethe's death*: In a letter written in 1864 Arnold links Goethe with Wordsworth and Byron, as in this poem; Goethe, he says, is great "in the line of human thought, Wordsworth in contemplation, Byron in that of passion." And in one of his essays he writes: "Goethe knew life and the world . . . much more comprehensively than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are." Goethe had large experience, large powers of observation, and deep critical insight; in the shifting age in which he lived (his years were 1749-1832) he was the sage "physician" (line 17), unerringly diagnosing its ailments (lines 20-22), and proposing as a refuge the high truth of art (line 28). His was the happiness of the majestic intellect, described by Arnold in lines (29-33) reminiscent of Virgil's lines (*Georgics*, II, 490-492) beginning "Felix qui potuit . . .," which may be translated: "Happy is he who has come to know the causes of things, and is thus above all fear and the dread march of fate and the roar of greedy Acheron."

38-39. *song of Orpheus* — — — *gloom*: See note under Browning's "Eurydice to Orpheus," page 751, above.

48. *as we lay at birth*: Neither here nor in his essay on Wordsworth does Arnold regard his beloved poet as a great intellect or mystic or prophet: his distinction is his "healing power" (line 63), like that of nature herself. Moral and spiritual — and supremely human — light and strength Arnold found in other "props" (see the sonnet "To a Friend," page 499, and the note). In Wordsworth he found simple, natural feeling, like that of childhood and youth — the wonder of our "early world" (line 57), not the spiritual insight

of maturity. Compare "Religious Isolation," page 500.

(501.) 68-70. *The cloud of mortal destiny* — — — *put it by*: It is salutary and necessary, Arnold implies, to set aside at times the dark problem of life.

72. *Rotha*: the stream that flows musically past the churchyard in Grasmere where Wordsworth lies buried.

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE AUTHOR OF "OBERMANN"

In his youth Arnold was drawn toward the disillusioned spirits — Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Byron, etc. — of the age out of which his own age developed. One of these writers was Senancour, a disciple of Rousseau, who died in 1846. He wrote *Obermann*, 1804, a romance in the form of letters, in which the hero expresses with great clearness the "malady of the age" (*maladie du siècle*): its emotional introversion, its desolating sense of spiritual emptiness, its vague but terrible melancholy. Himself more than touched with this malady, Arnold by self-discipline and "quiet work" rose above it to resignation and a courageous, if somewhat gray, faith in the spirit.

3. *rack*: broken clouds.

5-9. *baths* — — — *the Rhone*: "This poem was conceived, and partly composed," says Arnold, "in the valley going down from the foot of the Gemmi Pass towards the Rhone." The Baths of Leuk are referred to.

47. *but two*: Compare the view of Wordsworth and Goethe in "Memorial Verses" (page 500).

58. *Nature's plan*: not merely of external nature, but rather of the Universe, the whole of reality.

(502.) 89. *the son of Thetis*: Achilles.

103. *the world's life*: the higher, universal plane of life, attained by the impersonal study of self and of humanity. The phrase intends a contrast with the sense of the word "world" in the preceding stanza.

112. *healing sights*: sights of nature (such as those in the ensuing stanzas), bringing balm to wounded spirits. Cf.

"Wordsworth's healing power" in "Memorial Verses," line 63 (page 501).

(502.) 121. *Lake Leman's waters*: Lake Geneva; the Latin name, as in Byron and other poets.

132. *Half of my life*: the solitary life of reflection, in contrast with active life "in the world" (line 136).

(503.) 143. *Children of the Second Birth*: See *John*, III, 1-21. But Arnold uses the image with what difference in denotation that appears from lines 143-155?

179. *Capital of Pleasure*: Paris.

PROGRESS

This is Arnold's comment on a hasty and wholesale rejection of traditional Christianity in the name of "progress." It should be compared with Clough's "Easter Day" poems. The modern short-sighted reason and addiction to action (lines 17-20) are criticized by Arnold himself (the "some one" of line 21), willing that the Cross (line 27) should be abandoned as of old the carved gods were abandoned, but only in favor of a religion deeper even than traditional Christianity. Another voice, that of Jesus, follows, announcing a divine tolerance of any religion that really demands self-conquest and regeneration. Does our age, with its "pride of life" (line 46), possess such a religion?

REVOLUTIONS

The theme is the deepest of all revolutions, those in men's thoughts, ever changing and creating new civilizations. Compare the last stanza of Clough's "Ah! Yet Consider It Again!" (page 491). Each age states its conception of truth, contributing something but never grasping reality as a whole. Living in an age of rapid transition, Arnold was impressed with the impermanence of forms of thought.

THE SECOND BEST

The fifth stanza expresses Arnold's elevated critical sense, the final stanza his dominant criteria. What "first best" is implied by the title?

A SUMMER NIGHT

(506.) 75. *Madman or slave, must man be one?*: a succinct statement of the dilemma brought out in the long preceding passage (lines 26-74). Most men are slaves, imprisoned in conventional life, dying unfreed (line 50); the few others, escaping, sail blunderingly on the sea of life,—like a helmsman who, in the hour of shipwreck, still makes "for some false, impossible shore" (line 69) and who at length disappears along with wreck and passengers.

78-82. *Ye heavens — — — dust and toil*: Again the idea of quiet work.

LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

With this poem compare the preceding, line 76 to the end. What is it that Arnold, contemplating the wonderful activity of nature (lines 13-14), seeks in the outer world? Is nature, to him, a refuge from life,—an escape from the human problem,—or what? To what extent does his attitude repeat that of Wordsworth? Recall particular passages in Wordsworth.

23-24. *in my helpless cradle — — — rural Pan*: Arnold was born at Laleham, amid the simple lovely landscapes of the Thames valley.

(507.) 41-42. *The will — — — feel with others give*: Here Arnold places side by side the idea of stoical resignation and the idea of a sympathetic bond between men. For Arnold's sympathies with men, see also "To a Republican Friend" (page 499); for Clough's, see "Dipsychus," Part Second, scene 2 (page 488).

SELF-DEPENDENCE

Compare with the foregoing poem, and with "Religious Isolation" (page 500).

MORALITY

The first two stanzas set forth the relation of spiritual insight and moral work. Then the poet contrasts the joyous activity of nature with man's earnest, even gloomy, striving; and finally, beneath this contrast, suggests an original kinship between man

and nature, both having sprung from "the breast of God" (last line). Does this kinship involve a departure from the doctrine of "Religious Isolation" (page 500)? (508.) 16. *tasked morality*: morality assumed as a task.

HUMAN LIFE

The voyage of the individual through life, prescribed in an "inly-written chart" or law of his nature, is beset with alien objects and persons that lure him aside. And fain would each of us follow such lures, steering at random. But an *entirely* random course is impossible: the higher powers frustrate continually our wayward impulses.

26. *chartered*: equipped and sent forth (finely recalling line 5).—In the poem as a whole, observe just what "some unknown Powers" do, and do not do, for the individual; cf. "Religious Isolation" (page 500). Contrast Arnold's view with other views of Providence.

TO MARGUERITE

In the poem above, Arnold had said that we leave behind, in our voyage through life, "The friends to whom we had no natural right" (line 29). Here, brooding sadly on the want of fundamental sympathy and understanding between human beings, he expresses the feeling that, in the deepest sense, each human being is alone in the world, placed apart like an island ("enlised") in the sea of life. Cf. Clough's "Qua Cursum Ventus" (page 486).

THE BURIED LIFE

In the main, this poem elaborates the idea of a divinely-ordained solitude expressed in the preceding poem. But here the momentary revelations of human love that were hinted at in the preceding poem are enriched and deepened.

REQUIESCAT

(510.) 13. *cabined*: confined.

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Empedocles was a philosopher of Agrigento, Sicily, in the fifth century before Christ. Because of his extensive knowledge and his success in curing diseases, he was regarded as a magician; he ended his life fittingly—according to tradition—by flinging himself into the crater of Mt. Etna, in order that his sudden disappearance might cause him to be considered a god. For a short account of Empedocles the reader may consult Rogers' *A Student's History of Philosophy*; the best account, however, will be found in Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*, Chapter V.

Although Arnold follows the known facts pretty closely, and represents a number of the characteristic doctrines of the philosopher, at the same time he plainly expresses his own modern outlook on life. This he could do the more freely because, as he pointed out, there is an analogy between the time of Empedocles and his own time. "I intended to delineate," he says, "the feelings of one of the last of the Greek religious philosophers, . . . having survived his fellows, living on into a time when the habits of Greek thought and feeling had begun fast to change, character to dwindle, the influence of the Sophists to prevail. . . the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity have disappeared; the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced; modern problems have presented themselves; we hear already the doubts, we witness the discouragement, of Hamlet and of Faust."

A favorite of Browning's, this dramatic poem reminds one of "Paracelsus" (page 403) in theme and also in treatment, though not in spirit. Compare its spirit with that of Tennyson's "Ancient Sage" (page 397).—The old, despairing philosopher, weary of the world and of the problem of knowledge, is contrasted with the other two characters: the practical physician Pausanias, and the gay, sweetly-singing Callicles. It is a lovely summer morning, and a lovely scene, none finer in the world—the slopes leading up from the sapphire Mediterranean to the cone of Etna ten thousand feet above. Pausanias has come by appointment with Empedocles

to hear from that wonder-working wise man the secret of his famous cure of the woman Pantheia, whom he had brought back to life after she had been "in a cold trance of death" for thirty days. Pausanias chances upon the young harp-player Callicles, who, because of the dark mood of Empedocles, is to sing unseen, from a distance, in order to woo him to better cheer. Then follows Scene II, given here entire.

(511.) 27. *Mind is the spell which governs earth and heaven:* the doctrine of Empedocles, which is typical of the Greeks and of Clough and Arnold, that the mind in its wide sense ("imaginative reason," to use a phrase of Arnold's) is the avenue to the true knowledge (in contrast both with science and with superstition).

29. *thine own words:* The next two lines actually restate the words of Empedocles.

59. *Chiron, the aged Centaur:* the wisest of the Centaurs, living on Mount Pelion in Thessaly.

68. *Phthia:* a town in Thessaly where Achilles was born.

70. *Peleus:* the father of Achilles.
(512.) 84-85. *A thousand glimpses — — a whole:* "Each is convinced," said Empedocles, "of that alone which he has chanced upon as he is hurried to and fro, and idly fancies he has found the whole." See the note under "To a Friend," above, lines 9-14. Along with this doctrine of the limited vision of the individual, consider Arnold's idea of the limited vision of each epoch: see the note under "Revolutions," above.

98-100. *I judge as lost* etc.: He will not countenance a pessimistic interpretation of life, dictated by fear (line 102). Rather, he should seek "what most helps when known" (line 111).

136. *be a man:* This is in the mood of Greek humanism. Instead of despairing of life in a spirit of cynical skepticism or of pious otherworldliness, we should seek and obey the laws of man's nature.

140-141. *their oracle — — same as thine:* Why? — see the next stanza.

(513.) 150. *their own will to please:* This thought Arnold pursues, with a mind en-

riched by centuries of Christian doctrine and experience, as far as line 241. The passage will be illuminated by a comparison with Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, Book II, Chapter ix. "Love not Pleasure," cries Carlyle, "love God. This is the Everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved."

(514.) 246. *Other existences — — clash with ours:* inscrutable nature, following her own law; which is not the human law (cf. "Religious Isolation," page 500), and indeed clashes with the human law. The idea is expanded and exemplified in the stanzas that follow.

269. *To fight as best he can:* the "strife divine" of the moral life; see "Morality" (page 507).

(515.) 287-288. *All things — — Of but one stuff are spun:* Empedocles supported his faith in reason as the true means to knowledge with the doctrine that we ourselves are made of the elements that constitute the universe—earth, water, air, fire. Knowledge is possible because the thinking mind and the object of thought are fundamentally one.

(517.) 426. *Because thou must not dream* etc.: This thought, approached through the long passage preceding, is fairly representative of the ancient Greeks at the height of their culture. As humanists, they neither nourished supernatural "dreams" nor despaired in the face of human ignorance and fateful Nature. This golden mean between dreaming and despairing Arnold endeavored to revitalize in an age drifting to materialism and unfaith, availing himself of "the best that has been thought and said" in the intervening centuries for a corroboration of his position.

436. *Cadmus and Harmonia:* By Athena, Cadmus was made governor of Thebes, and by Zeus was given Harmonia in marriage. Having prayed to the gods to be removed from the ills of life (see line 438), Cadmus and Harmonia were transformed into serpents (line 435), and as such were oblivious of the woes of Thebes that they had witnessed, and unacquainted with the later woes. — Why did Arnold introduce "the Theban story" here?

440. *the Sphinx:* See the note under

Shelley's "Choruses from Hellas," line 1080, page 693, above.

(517.) 442. *the Ismenus*: a river in Boeotia, associated with the dark tale of Thebes.

477. *And I — — again*: Empedocles alludes, with deliberate ambiguity, to the transmigration of souls. Weary of life, an alien in the new age in which he finds himself, he now proceeds on his way to the summit of Etna. There, in the second Act (there are but two), he hurls himself into the crater, returning to the elements, but not to die wholly.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Having the courage of his classical convictions, Arnold in his volume of 1853 suppressed the dramatic poem "Empedocles on Etna," on the ground that the subject was an unsuitable one. "The suffering," he said, "finds no vent in action" — except the final plunge — and action, as Aristotle and Greek poetry had apparently shown, is the heart of the drama and the epic. In "Sohrab and Rustum," Arnold attempted, with a large measure of success, to compose a genuinely classical narrative poem. It is an heroic episode modelled upon Homer. The type of subject, involving clearly-defined, universal feelings, is Homeric; so is the design, the narrative pattern that unfolds itself; so is the simple, elevated tone, approaching what Arnold liked to term "the grand style"; so is the plain diction, throwing the main interest upon the events and the persons, rather than attracting attention to its own felicity. Nor is it wanting altogether that spirit of energetic imagination which gives vital movement to Homer, though it must be admitted that Arnold could not wholly avoid the perils of imitative composition, nor reproduce that extraordinary "rapidity" combined with "nobility" that he found in his master (see the fine essay "On Translating Homer").

Telling the story for the story's sake rather than with a moral or intellectual purpose, he did not obtrude his "criticism of life." Yet it is there, and accords with his usual way of thinking. In its pervading temper, says Stuart P. Sherman, this

poem differs widely from the temper of "Empedocles." "It is poignantly sad, but is not depressing; for it is in the heroic mood. The distressfulness of the action is relieved by the splendid courage and magnanimity of the participants, and their bitter conflict ends not in despondency but in a solemn peace, which affects the reader with a curious sense of liberation, enlargement, and exaltation. It yields, in short, the special joy of the truly tragic: a sense of something transcending the individual life, of something in the world nobler than nature, of something in the heart which destiny cannot break — a sense, in the presence of death, of deathless things."

(518.) 1. *And*: Arnold termed the poem "An Episode," as if it were only part of an epic. The episode is from the story of Rustum (or Rustam), which is prominent in the epic "Shah-Namah" (Book of Kings), by the great Persian poet, Ferdousi, of the tenth century. — See the note under "Rubaiyat," line 39, above.

2. *the Oxus*: Arnold keeps this "majestic river," the chief river of central Asia, before us from the beginning to the end of the poem. It may be said to correspond, in the order of nature, to the great human powers displayed in the story.

(519.) 111. *As when*: the beginning of an "epic simile" such as Homer and later writers of epic used.

(520.) 118 ff. *First . . . Next* etc.: This catalogue, or naming of the opposed forces, is another Homeric mode.

(523.) 282. *Dight*: furnished.

(524.) 331. *be as my son*: The poignant use of pathos based on non-recognition, involving language that has one meaning for the characters and another for the reader or spectator, is characteristic of Greek imaginative literature. It occurs with magnificent effect in the "Oedipus the King" of Sophocles. Arnold used it climactically from this point forward.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there, and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these ex-

travagant people, by the insinuating subtlety of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned." — Glanvil, *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661 (Arnold's note).

By means of this simple story element, Arnold gives an obvious unity and focus to the charming view of nature and the brooding on the *maladie du siècle* that are the essential substance of this poem. One need not be an Oxonian to sense the extraordinary accuracy and sympathy with which Arnold has described the simple beauty of that Oxford country that he loved so well. Affectionately he dwells on its every feature — the places with their names and associations, the human beings harmoniously present in the scene, the detailed objects of nature: birds, flowers, trees. In "Sohrab and Rostum" he had taken pains to render nature correctly, though not knowing the East at first hand; here, at home in the Thames country of his birth and boyhood and college days, he attains a truth due as much to fond familiarity as to that prevailing passion for seeing things as they are which he manifested in great matters and in small. Without Wordsworth's mysticism, without Tennyson's decorative instinct, he is perhaps the most faithful of nineteenth century poets in his presentation of nature's detail. Compare the whole tone, and the stanza-form, of Keats's "To Autumn" (page 254).

As the setting of the Glanvil story

afforded an opportunity for a minute pictorial treatment of nature, so the character of the vagrant scholar suggested the contrast between the spontaneous unity of such a life as his in that early time, and the "sick hurry" and "divided aims" of our modern world. Cf. "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann'" (page 501). (534.) 1. *shepherd*: Though turning soon to the actual Oxford landscape, at the beginning the poet evokes the pastoral atmosphere by representing himself as having talked with a shepherd in an upland field on an afternoon of late summer.

2. *wattled cotes*: sheep-folds.

23. *corn*: grain, wheat.

35. *preferment's door*: a position in the Church.

(535.) 42. *erst*: formerly.

59. *ingle-bench*: seat nearest the fire.

66-69. *in my boat I lie* etc.: a characteristic Oxford picture. The boat is a punt (as in line 76).

(536.) 95. *lasher*: the pool below a weir (dam). — The verb "pass" goes with "men," two lines above.

129. *The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall*: the windows, bright at the hour of dining, in the beautiful hall of Christ-Church College.

(537.) 147. *teen*: suffering.

149. *just-pausing Genius*: In Roman religion, each person was believed to receive at birth an attendant spirit that presided over his fortunes and in the end conducted him out of the world. Our Genius pauses — justly — to permit us to show our weakness before removing us from life.

174. *insight — — borne fruit in deeds*: For this test of genuine insight see also "Progress," line 47 (page 504).

182-190. *one, — — — varied anodynes*: Does the stanza refer to Tennyson? Consider the date of "In Memoriam."

191-196. *we others pine . . . hope like thine*: Find passages in the preceding poems of Arnold ("Empedocles," for example) more fully expressing this mood and these ideas.

(538.) 208-209. *Averse, as Dido — — — in Hades turn*: When Æneas, who had deserted Dido, Queen of Carthage, saw her

shade in the lower world and addressed her, "she, turned away, held her eyes fixed upon the ground" (*Æneid*, VI, 469).

(538.) 232-250. *As some grave Tyrian trader* etc.: The unerring art of this classical description makes large amends for the fragile analogy between the scholar-gipsy and the trader from Phoenicia. Observe also the whole tone of the two closing stanzas, in contrast with those that precede.

244. *Blue Midland: Mediterranean.*

249. *Iberians:* inhabitants of the Spanish peninsula, whither the trader from Tyre has come to avoid the competing Greeks.

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

(539.) 30. *Carthusians' world-famed home:* La Grande Chartreuse, the chief monastery of the Carthusian monks, founded in the eleventh century, and situated in the Alps of southeastern France.

62. *pilgrim-host:* Carthusian monks on a pilgrimage.

83. *runic:* inscribed in the runic or old Teutonic alphabet.

85-86. *Wandering between two worlds* etc.: The "dead" world is Europe before the French Revolution. Arnold is thinking, in particular, of its Christian religion, profoundly vital in the Middle Ages, conventionalized later, and regarded as "impossible" by the mind of his own age. The passing of the social standards of the old order was lamented by Burke in the famous passage beginning "The age of chivalry is gone. . . . The glory of Europe is extinguished forever" ("Reflections on the French Revolution"). The "other" world, "powerless to be born," is the new age of faith that will reestablish, on a new foundation, the old sense of unity, and harmony, and certitude. Has the new faith (and with it, the new social order) come into being since Arnold wrote this poem, or are we, too, wandering between two worlds?

(540.) 96. *false control:* the pressure of the world and of his own restless "pain,"

as in the next two stanzas. The mood of the present stanza recalls what passages in "Lines written in Kensington Gardens" (page 506)?

99. *sciolists:* superficially scientific folk. Arnold has already dealt with their type of mind in "Progress" (see the poem, page 503, and the note, page 767).

115-116. *Achilles ponders* — — — *are dumb:* The allusion is to the first book of the *Iliad*. The heroic minds of our time, like Achilles pondering in his tent, are dumb—silent "though not content" (line 117). Arnold need not mean actual silence, but rather the lack of an assured, authoritative accent on the part of those who (like Carlyle, Tennyson, and himself) would look forward to the world yet unborn.

135. *Ætolian:* Grecian.

142. *Spezzian bay:* along the Italian coast, where Shelley spent the last months of his life. •

146. *Obermann:* Senancour; see "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann'" (page 501).

157-160. *an age* — — — *frivolity:* Here Arnold suggests his hope for the new age, which should be sage without hardness (without the hardness, say, of the Middle Ages and Puritanism), and gay without frivolity (without the frivolity that the gayety of the Renaissance led to). Where and when has the peculiar texture of life that he desires existed?—It should be remembered that Arnold himself, despite the melancholy in his poetry, had a gay, fun-loving side, urbanely displayed in his personal life, in his letters, and to some extent in his satirical prose criticism of his age.

164. *The exulting thunder of your race:* the noisy triumphs of the "Sons of the world" in line 161—of the active, worldly, scientific modern age.

167. *pride of life:* Cf. "Progress," line 46 (page 504).

(541.) 174. *close:* enclosed space.

194. *Action and pleasure:* typified, above, by the passing troops and by the hunters and gay dames. They are ever the leading interests of sons of the world—see the note to line 164, above.

AUSTERITY OF POETRY

(541.) 1. *That son of Italy*: Giacomone di Todi, a poet of the thirteenth century.

14. *Of thought and of austerity*: On the want of substance in the poetry of the earlier nineteenth century, see the biographical introduction to Arnold, page 762, and his various comments on Byron.—What is the significance of the word "hidden" in the previous line?

WORLDLY PLACE

3. *Marcus Aurelius*: Roman emperor and philosopher, whose *Meditations* was one of the books that Arnold most valued (for its "inwardness"), and who is the subject of one of the best of the *Essays in Criticism*,—an essay that throws much light on Arnold's conception of the noble life.

WEST LONDON

(542.) 12-14. *that cold succor* — — — *than ours*: The charity bestowed by the great upon the little is cold, unsympathetic, because it is unknowing. In turning, with a true instinct, to the humble, the knowing, who understand her plight and therefore respond with a real sympathy, the woman points toward a future when human relations will be wider and sounder. See Arnold's essays on "Democracy" and "Equality"; and what he calls the "social idea" in the first chapter of *Culture and Anarchy*.

THE BETTER PART

What are the several attitudes toward Christ and his teaching in this sonnet and in the preceding ("East London")? With the questions and answers in lines 10-14, compare the thought of "Progress" (page 503).

IMMORTALITY

(543.) 9-14. *the energy of life* — — — *eternal life*: Again Arnold's idea of moral strenuousness, of quiet, progressive work that shapes the character and spirit, and so rises toward life eternal.

THE DIVINITY

6-8. *bore of men* — — — *he outweighed*: The words of Saint Bernard (the French ecclesiastic of the twelfth century) have won the lasting approval of mankind, but who remembers his obscure opponent — Gilbert de la Porrée?

11. *Wisdom and goodness, they are God*: Cf. his prose definition of God: "the not-ourselves which makes for righteousness" (*Literature and Dogma*). Religion, the relation of man to God, he defined as "morality touched with emotion."

DOVER BEACH

In this poem Arnold's note of disillusionment and desolation is sounded deeply. From the melancholy beauty of the sea spread calm beneath the full moon, he passes, symbolically, to the thoughts and feelings suggested by this scene. Characteristically, his mind turns first to Sophocles, who, hearing the sad music of the Ægean, had brooded upon the "ebb and flow of human misery" Then comes his own thought of the Sea of Faith, once at full tide but steadily withdrawing. Compare "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (page 538).

28. *shingles*: pebbly shores, such as are common in England.

29-30. *let us be true To one another*: The poet regards human constancy as a firm resting-place for the spirit in this age of dissolution.

37. *ignorant armies clash by night*: The poem ends in sombre hopelessness, contrary to Arnold's usual poetic practice. Contrast the end of a somewhat similar poem, "A Summer Night" (page 505).

PIS-ALLER

The title means "The Last Resource." If, unlike the poet, you cannot find a "moral plan" of life without the aid of revealed religion (traditional Christianity); if you find that for you it is a choice between revealed religion and nothing at all, — cling, then, to your religion.

PALLADIUM

The Palladium was an image of Pallas Athena enshrined in the city of Troy; so long as it remained there it was believed to assure the preservation of the city.

(544.) 1. *Simois*: the river of that name.

14. *Xanthus*: a river flowing through the plain where Trojans and Greeks fought.

21-22. *the soul* — — — *a ruling effluence send*: This belief in a soul, or higher level of life, serene and unchanging amid the endless fluctuation of our emotional and active life, is frequent in Arnold's poetry; cf., for example, "The Buried Life" (page 509), especially the last stanzas. No doubt in this respect he was influenced by R. W. Emerson. Read Arnold's essay on Emerson (in *Discourses in America*, 1885); and Emerson's essay on "The Over-Soul."

A WISH

(545.) 35. *The world* — — — *ere I was born*: Cf. "Empedocles," line 186 and the ensuing passage (page 513).

37. *never . . . the friend of one*: The universe does not exist for the satisfaction of the individual. Cf. "Empedocles," lines 147-186 (page 513); also "Human Life" (page 508) and the notes.

RUGBY CHAPEL

In this memorial poem on Thomas Arnold (see the biographical introduction, page 762, above), the vigorous short lines are pervaded by a deep feeling that largely compensates the frequent commonplace-ness of diction.

(546.) 106-109. *we strain on* etc.: Cf. "Immortality" (page 542), and the note (page 773).

145-146. *through thee I believe* etc.: The firm, strong, beneficent character of Dr. Arnold makes real and near, for his son, the great men of the past. But for such an example, they might have seemed mythical — the expression of our dream of what men might be (lines 151-152, below).

(547.) 162. *sons*: as in *John*, I, 12.

182. *keep, keep them combined*:

The goal is not merely individual salvation, but the salvation of all. Cf. lines 124-144, above. This social conception of the good reappears, prominently, in Arnold's gospel of Culture: "Culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater! — the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light" (*Culture and Anarchy*). In Dr. Arnold's vigorous character, together with his zeal as a helper of mankind in the quest for character and light, Arnold in his early years found a type of personal excellence that influenced all his later thinking.

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

Review "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann'" (page 501), and the general note (page 766). — The quotation used as a motto may be translated as follows: "Do you know any boon that solaces the grief for a lost world?"

1. *Glion*: "Probably all who know the Vevey end of the Lake of Geneva will recollect Glion, the mountain village above the castle of Chillon. Glion now has hotels, *pensions*, and villas; but twenty years ago it was hardly more than the huts of Avant opposite to it" (Arnold's note).

(548.) 39. *my wandering youth*: Arnold's years of groping for light and leading, before the conflicting claims of his nature were harmonized.

(549.) 109-112. *The East bowed . . . in thought again*: Passively resisting, the meditative Orient disdained the invasion of the active Occident, and when it was over resumed her timeless brooding.

133. *pride of life*: as in "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," line 167 (page 540), and "Progress," line 46 (page 504). To the late pagan "pride of life" succeeded the Eastern religion of Christianity, with its renunciation of the world and its humble quest of a childlike innocence (lines 134-140).

141. *Oh, had I lived in that great*

day: Arnold expresses, ostensibly in the words of the author of "Obermann," his own yearning for ecstatic religious experience, which he might have attained in its fullness when the Sea of Faith girdled the world (cf. "Dover Beach," page 543). For his sympathy with the early medieval faith, see also "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (page 538).

(549.) 168. *He lived while we believed*: With this whole passage on Jesus compare the "Easter Day" poems of Clough (page 488).

(550.) 185-188. *Unduped — — — the way divine*: The suggestion is that Christ's message to our age is fundamentally the same as that which he preached to his own; while of course "fancy" and "all too human creeds" allude to Christian theology. Compare the message in the four closing stanzas of "Progress" (page 504).

193. *Its frame yet stood*: i.e., before the French Revolution, the "storm" of the stanzas that follow.

232. *See — — — new: Revelation, XXI, 5*. The whole chapter is recalled.

235-236. *old-world cures — — — wholly feel*: Can the woes of the modern world — woes of the spirit and of the social order too (line 230) — be cured by an old religion that is only half believed?

237-238. *such need of joy . . . whose grounds are true*: Consider the diverse search for joy in the early poets — Wordsworth, Keats, etc. — and the same search, with less poetic gusto but a more critical sense of true grounds, in the Victorians.

245-246. *But now — — — yet born*: Cf. "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," lines 85-86 (page 539).

(551.) 269. *If Paris* etc.: If you can tear yourself away from the Capital of Pleasure long enough to make the short excursion to Sévres.

286. *A green, new earth appears*: Through Obermann, the poet ventures to give a prophecy (prepared for in lines 79-80) of a new era, a new spiritual and social order in the world, foreshadowed by a stirring of new life. Compare the almost contemporary *Culture and Anarchy*, Ch. I, fifth paragraph. Indeed, the poem as a whole may be read as a transition from the

individual and elegiac tone of Arnold's verse to the more social and hopeful tone of his prose, due to enlarged historical outlook.

(552.) 348. *I saw the morning break*: Cf. the suggestion of symbolism in the concluding passage of "Sohrab and Rustum" (page 533).

EMILY BRONTË: NO COWARD SOUL

The three Brontë sisters — Charlotte, Emily, and Anne — led a singularly secluded, monotonous, and intense life at the parsonage at Haworth in the Yorkshire moors. In 1846 they published, together, a volume entitled *Poems* "by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell." In 1847, Emily Brontë (1818-1848), a year before her early death by consumption, published her novel *Wuthering Heights*, a Yorkshire moorland tragedy told with a controlled intensity that makes it one of the great novels of the century. Though nourished, like her sisters, on the best literature, and writing from childhood onwards, she did not attain, in her short life, a vehicle of expression in either prose or verse equal to her passionate emotion, her masculine strength, her intellectual power, her austere and indomitable stoicism. Yet these qualities are in her work, plain enough to the discerning. In verse, she used simple, trite measures that are sometimes strangely in contrast with the burning emotions and ethical energy and insight that give her lines distinction. Best of her few poems is "No coward soul is mine," found on her desk after she had died standing upright, resting one hand upon the table, in the little parlor of the dreary parsonage.

In the present poem, compare Emily Brontë's attitude toward creeds, and the ground of her stoical faith, with the conclusions attained by Clough and Arnold.

GEORGE ELIOT: THE CHOIR INVISIBLE

Mary Ann Evans ("George Eliot") (1819-1880) began her literary career with

the anonymous publication of her translation of Strauss's *Leben Jesu* (Life of Jesus), an epoch-making contribution toward that rationalistic restudy of the Bible which the modern scientific spirit had made necessary. Asserting that the testimony of the gospel witnesses was not falsehood, as a shallow rationalism had concluded, but rather "misrepresentation of the truth," Strauss made a thorough-going attempt to interpret the whole of the gospel narrative according to this point of view. Some years after the publication of this translation, Miss Evans put into English another German theological work, Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christenthums* (Essence of Christianity). By this time her talent had been rightly valued by George Henry Lewes, who in 1851 had become her unlegalized husband. To his encouragement and criticism is owing, in no small measure, the long series of novels which constitute George Eliot's most important work.

Her religious life began in a pious, ascetic, Calvinistic girlhood; carried her to an inner crisis when her vigorous intellect had developed; and continued in changing forms consonant with her growing rationalism. Her strong ethical and spiritual sense suffuses most of her writings. Her earliest published work was a religious poem of no consequence; and the best of her poems, "O May I Join the Choir Invisible," is religiously humanitarian.

The present poem was published with a motto, from Cicero, which may be translated: "I am more concerned with the long time to come, when I shall be no more, than with this narrow present."—With the thought of this poem, compare Arnold's "Rugby Chapel," beginning at line 145 (page 546).

(552.) 17. *shaming still its child*: Penitence, the offspring of "Rebellious flesh" (line 16) is shamed by the next lapse—a continual alternation.

(553.) 25. *saw*: The subject of the verb is "That" (line 23).—"Self" (line 21) remains without a verb till line 30.

31-32. *the human sky* etc.: Cf. *Isaiah*, xxxiv, 4: "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll."

CORY: MIMNERMUS IN CHURCH

William Johnson (1823-1892),—who in later life, upon succeeding to an estate, took the name of Cory,—was for twenty-seven years an assistant master at Eton. A medal man in his day at Cambridge, short, awkward, with crooked but sturdy legs, dreaded by his classes for his irony, yet easy to evade because of his near-sightedness, he must have been a picturesque figure. Yet he belonged to the company of "famous men," in the sense of Kipling's poem on schoolmasters,— "for their work continueth": many in a distinguished roll of pupils attributed to him their first awakening of intellectual enthusiasm. "It was with a division of from fifty to sixty boys, in a small and dingy room, that a teacher, whose every third sentence was an epigram, whose lectures, had they been delivered to a University audience, would have attracted professed students and curious listeners alike, spent deliberately and with enthusiasm the best hours of the best years of his life" (W. R. Nicoll and T. J. Wise, *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*, page 399). With the aid of powerful spectacles and a binocular glass, he watched cricket-matches. "I cheer the games I cannot play," is a line found among his graceful verses on school themes. His hobby was the military and naval history of England, the minutiae of which he had at his tongue's end. Some of his poems show a tender sentiment for individual pupils that was probably not suspected from his classroom demeanor.

Cory, who loved the Greek elegiac poets among the ancients, and Tennyson especially among the moderns, published one short book of verse, *Ionica*. A typical theme is that of "An Invocation": the imagined delight of initiating the boy of ancient Greece, "Comatas," into the glories of modern literature. The admiration of boyhood, the delicate fancy, the freshness, the restraint, which charmed a small circle when the book was privately printed in 1858, are no less charming today.

Mimnermus was a Greek elegiac poet who flourished at the end of the seventh century B.C. The few extant fragments

of his poetry dwell plaintively on the evanescent charms of youth and love, and bewail the coming of old age. The idea of Cory's poem is that if Mimmermus could have heard the Christian gospel, he might have replied in some such words as these. — "There is no modern book of verse in which a certain melancholy phase of ancient thought is better reproduced than in *Ionica*" (E. Gosse, *Gossip in a Library*, page 315). — With this poem compare lines 245-252 of the Rubaiyat (page 482).

GEORGE MacDONALD (1824-1905)

These poems of George MacDonald represent a large body of Victorian verse, of transcendental tendencies, more notable for religious and ethical aspiration than for markedly poetic quality. The writer, a Scotsman, had been for a short time a Congregational minister, and continued as an occasional lay preacher after leaving his church (the congregation objected to his "unorthodoxy") to engage in literary work. He is best known by a series of thoughtful novels, — *David Elginbrod*, etc. — depicting Scottish life and evincing hostility to Calvinism in the handling of theological problems; but he wrote also considerable verse, including children's poems. He lectured successfully in England and America, and was an eminent figure in philanthropy and popular education.

DE PROFUNDIS

The title means, "From the Depths."
(553.) 5. *cark*: fret.

10. *temple*: See *First Corinthians*, III, 16-17.

13-14. *When I am with thee* etc.: Compare, for example: "Seldom am I gathered together in Thee, and more seldom am I purged from having my mind overmuch on worldly things" (*Imitation of Christ*).

17-18. *Where now — — thy wind*: instead of surrendering the whole "house" (line 4). — It seems that the poet's state at the *present* moment is mystic inertia, midway between the dark struggle of worldly life (lines 5-8) and the flaming endeavor of the spirit.

THIS INFANT WORLD

In 1856 a serious illness had compelled MacDonald to winter in Algiers. This poem is the second of two sonnets inspired by an African scene of "great sweeps of savage mountains"; where rocks, once below the primeval ocean, were now covered with "crumbling lichens." As to his own frame of mind at the time, the poet says:

... "A dry flow
Of withering wind sucked up my drooping strength,
Itself weak from the desert's burning length."

For the general idea, compare "In Memoriam," CXVIII, etc. (page 357). But characteristic of MacDonald is the striking sestet, with its simple confidence of spirit, unperplexed by the "strife" of "God and Nature."

(554.) 14. *thy child*: This common phrase is here a suggestive sequel of "infant world," "young earth," and "old chaotic prime."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894)

The Oxford Movement, which supplied the Pre-Raphaelites with a merely aesthetic stimulus, was the determining influence upon the religious poetry of Christina Rossetti. The sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (who was the most remarkable member of a remarkable family), she lived a sheltered life in the London home, first of her father, and later of her other brother, William Michael. Though from youth physically delicate and for extended periods invalid, she was assiduous in the observances of the Anglo-Catholic Church (as the Church of England was termed by followers of the Oxford Movement); engaged in such charitable and humanitarian undertakings as her limited strength and means permitted; and did a considerable amount of writing both in verse and in devotional prose. Her experience was devoid of striking external incidents, and, though her poetry reveals an intense inner life, she was habitually reticent regarding her pri-

vate feelings. Apparently a natural liveliness of disposition was early moderated by instinctive piety and by the renunciations which a very sensitive conscience imposed. Two love affairs, one culminating when she was nineteen, the second taking place in her thirties, left a deep impress upon her character and her writing. In the first case, she felt compelled to break an engagement with an indecisive suitor who, after renouncing Roman Catholicism for her sake, had later rejoined that communion. Her second lover was an estimable and unworldly scholar, Charles Bagot Cayley; her rejection of his offer was due, at least in part, to scruples regarding his religious beliefs, but she continued to love him, says her brother William, to the last day of her life. Although Miss Rossetti was by no means an intolerant person, in matters involving her own faith or conscience she was adamant, reminding us of her verse concerning another, "She stands there patient, nerved with inner light" (from "A Soul," page 555). With all her sweetness, this over-scrupulousness was, as her brother admits, a fault; but a fault by which English literature is the gainer. How exquisitely responsive she was to human love is shown in the touching lyrics, "When I am dead, my dearest," "Oh roses for the flush of youth," "Echo" (page 555), and that birthday song of pure joy, Elizabethan in its full-throated melody, "My heart is like a singing bird." But it was the instinct of renunciation from which came those greater poems of spiritual depth and insight, "Two Pursuits" (page 554), "Does the road wind up-hill all the way?" and "Passing Away" (page 555). The contrast between her certitude and the troubled spirit of the Victorian period is striking. In the expression of religious faith, neither intellectualized into doctrine nor shadowed by doubt, Miss Rossetti is perhaps excelled by no other English poet.

The poetry of Christina Rossetti is enforced, sincere, nearly always somewhat individual in expression. The predominance of the ideas of death and religious seeking is not surprising when we remember how often she or those dear to her trod the Valley of the Shadow, and how continuously her thoughts centered in the

fears and the ecstasies of her faith. Yet extended reading in her poems (aside from the highly imaginative fantasy *Goblin Market*) leaves an impression of tenuousness and monotony. Apparently this persistent, gentle exercise of her faculty was the necessary process by which she arrived at her occasional triumphs of the singing voice, of authentic inspiration. Her work more than bears comparison with that of Mrs. Browning, whom Christina Rossetti admired, and with whom she shares the primacy among the women poets of England of all periods. Mrs. Browning is more varied, more intellectual, more ardent; she touches life at more points, and she writes with a greater abandon. On the other hand, her poetry shows faults of taste, in conception and in execution, from which Miss Rossetti's is free. And in what may be regarded as the main point of interest in such a comparison—the completeness with which either writer has grasped and expressed those phases of the life of the spirit which belong peculiarly to women—Miss Rossetti would probably be given the preference. Even in her religious mysticism there is something feminine. "Read the masculine poets who have heard this mystic call of the spirit, and you feel yourself in the presence of a strong will that has grasped the world, and, finding it insufficient, deliberately casts it away; and there is no room for pathetic regret in their ruthless determination to renounce. But this womanly poet does not properly renounce at all, she passively allows the world to glide away from her. The strength of her genius is endurance" (P. E. More, *Shelburne Essays*, Third Series, page 128).

TWO PURSUITS

Compare "The Pillar of the Cloud" (page 299).—The next sonnet may be read as a sequel.

REST

What is the peculiar beauty of this poem in comparison with section XLIII of "In Memoriam" (page 333)?

A SOUL

Similar in theme to "Prospice" (page 469), and very different in mood and idea. (555.) 1. *Parian statues*: Parian marble, used in choice works of ancient sculpture, is a mellow white.

8. *That foot-track*: her path through life, now all behind her.

14. *against*: toward and anticipating; cf. lines 5-6, 10. — Another sonnet, written in the first person, begins with the following quatrain:

"Darkness and light are both alike to Thee:

Therefore to Thee I lift my darkened face;

Upward I look with eyes that fail to see,
Athirst for future light and present grace."

PASSING AWAY

This poem, particularly in its refrain, recalls the mood of the sonnet of "Rest" (page 554).

PART THREE: THE LATER NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

W. B. SCOTT: PYGMALION

William Bell Scott (1811-1890), at once poet and painter like Rossetti, was a close associate in London of the Pre-Raphaelite artists, and they figure largely in his *Autobiographical Notes* (1892). — "Pygmalion and the Image" is the subject of one of the stories in *The Earthly Paradise* of William Morris. In Morris's treatment of the old myth, the statue, before its awakening, stands 'with one hand reached out as to a lover . . .

The other held a fair rose over-blown;
No smile was on the parted lips; the eyes
Seemed as if even now great love had
shown
Unto them, something of its sweet sur-
prise,
Yet saddened them with half-seen mys-
teries;
And still midst passion maiden-like she
seemed,
As though of love unchanged for aye she
dreamed."

The transformation is approached very gradually. — But here, in accordance with the sonnet-form, it comes in a rapid climax. This sonnet may serve to introduce that fresh preoccupation with art and beauty, and that withdrawal from Victorian problems of conduct and religion, which appears in the work of Rossetti and Morris.

(557.) 2. *myrtle*: sacred to Venus.

4. *shafts*: pillars (of the temple).

13. *zoned*: girdled. — *peplos*: (same as "peplum") a rich drapery, folded irregularly about the body.

14. *at once*: given at once.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882)

After the poetic spirit of the early nineteenth century, with its exquisite sensuousness, its eagerness for beauty, its faith in imagination, its love of adventure and of wonder, had been controlled and deepened, — at the expense of its freshness and energy, — by the more ethical and intellectual muse of the middle of the century, there came a romantic revival, a kind of Indian summer, reacting against the materialism of the new industrial era, as the original romantic impulse had reacted against the "prose and reason" of the eighteenth century. In this revival, the leading poets were Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne; and it was the first of the three, Rossetti, who was, according to Ruskin, "the chief intellectual force in the establishment of the Modern Romantic School in England."

This position Rossetti attained through his activity in two arts: painting and poetry. Three-quarters Italian by blood, he came naturally by a warm æstheticism that is rare in England. Most of his education he received in London art academies. In 1848, with Holman Hunt, Millais, and others, he founded the Pre-Raphaelite school of painting, which rejected the conventions associated with the imitation of Raphael, and called for a return to the naïve truth and mystical piety of the earlier Italian painters. Himself the leading force in Pre-Raphaelitism, Rossetti exemplified its doctrines in both his pictures and his poetry. They are manifest, for instance, in "The Blessed Damozel," written when he was but nineteen. Thereafter, although for many years he gave his main energy to

painting, his devotion to literature persisted. He loved Dante, and translated admirably *The Early Italian Poets* (1861). Of English writers he seems to have been most attached to Malory, Coleridge, and Keats; and he reproduced in his own verse something of the medieval picturesqueness of the first, the magic and wonder of the second, and the rich sensuousness and closely packed phrasing of the third. Many of his poems, long a source of fascination to his friends, appeared in a volume published in 1870; it was followed by *Poems and Ballads* the year before his death. In his closing years he was subject to depression, used chloral too freely, and became a recluse. Earlier, his life had been darkened by the premature death of his wife (see the introductory note on "The House of Life," below).

Though gifted with a strong mind and character, Rossetti held aloof from the social and intellectual problems of his day; they did not interest him, they scarcely existed for him. What did interest him and wholly absorb him was art—beauty—perfect expression. A warm, breathing, forcibly concentrated expression, with Dante's sharpness of imagery, and the romantic blending of sense and soul, and his own peculiar lusciousness,—such is Rossetti's poetry. Sometimes it cloy; generally it exerts the enchantment of a luxuriant, lovingly tended garden of verse, quite unique in our language.

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

(557.) 25. *by dwindling years*: by old persons. As their remaining years become fewer, they may catch, whenever the clock strikes, the warning of Time which others hear only in the twelve strokes that tell the end of each day.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

Rossetti's painting of the same name (reproduced in Marillier's *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*) corresponds to the picture given in the poem. He had in mind the visual conception of heaven used by Dante, not Milton.

"I saw that Poe had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth [in "The Raven"] and so I determined to reverse the conditions, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven" (Rossetti). But notice that this yearning—as indicated by the parenthetical passages in the poem—is that which is *attributed* to the "loved one in heaven" by "the lover on earth," and answers to *his own* yearning (see line 19 ff.). In spirit the poem is the converse of Christina Rossetti's "Passing Away" and "Lord, Dost Thou Look" (pages 555, 556).

(558.) 10. *For service meetly worn*: fittingly worn in the service of Mary.—The "white rose" suggests both love and purity.

47. Supply "until" (from line 45) before *the lilies*.

(559.) 114. *just born, being dead*: Cf. the last line of the preceding poem.

126. *citherns and citoles*: In medieval times, the cithern was a kind of lute or guitar. The citole was a small dulcimer, i.e., a stringed instrument held horizontally.

127-132. *There will I ask* etc.: See the second paragraph of the introductory note; and compare Browning's "Speculative" (page 471).

SISTER HELEN

The superstition on which this poem is founded, though very ancient and widespread, is most familiar to us in the medieval European setting that Rossetti here draws upon.

The false lover whom Helen is punishing is Keith of Ewern.—The "little brother" provides the viewpoint of a simple and innocent, but closely interested, onlooker. The effect of the parenthetical refrain comes out very well if it be rapidly chanted by several persons in unison, while two others read the parts of the brother and sister.

(562.) 129. *the white plume*: It shines in the moonlit darkness, like "the white mane" (line 73).

148. *a broken coin*: i.e., his half of the divided coin that served as a pledge; alluded to in line 151.

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

The metre is the terza rima of the original: the second line of each tercet rhymes with the first and third of the succeeding. Those who cannot read the original may fruitfully compare the blank verse line-for-line rendering in Henry Johnson's translation of *The Divine Comedy* (Yale Press, 1915).

Francesca, an Italian lady of the thirteenth century, and Paolo, her husband's younger brother, were killed by the husband when he discovered their illicit love. Here, the shades of the two appear to Dante; and, through the words of Francesca, he recounts the most intense and appealing moment in their story. — For Leigh Hunt's use of the story see the note on him, above (page 694). Poetic dramas have been made of it by G. H. Boker (1823-1890) and Stephen Phillips (1864-1915).

(565.) 12. *thy guide*: Virgil.

20. *still*: always.

26. *A Galahalt* etc.: Of the various medieval versions of the story of Lancelot and Guinevere, she particularizes the one they were reading.

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

The poet had particularly in mind the apathy with which other countries were witnessing the national struggle of Hungary and Italy against Austria.

THE SEA-LIMITS

The title suggests at once the shore, and the bounded purpose, of the sea.

(566.) 3. *The murmur* etc.: as though the Earth were a shell and the sea's sound were the murmur of it. Cf. lines 22-25.

4-6. *Secret* — — — *further*: Continuance, mysterious and awful, is the sea's goal; nor can our human eyes perceive an aim beyond that (cf. lines 26-28).

8-10. *No quiet* etc.: The sea has none of the real quiet which belongs to Death; but only the mournfulness which belongs to aged Life, in its dull, persistent effort to continue (cf. the last line of the preceding poem).

11-12. *As the world's heart* etc.:

The uneasy beating of the waves on the shore is as the pulse of the world's heart, in which passion and apathy (or "rest") alternate.

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

This great sonnet-sequence, on which Rossetti worked intermittently from his twentieth year until just before his death, was mainly inspired by his love and grief for Elizabeth Siddal. She shared his interest in art and poetry, and her type of beauty appealed strongly to him. Her features appear in the ideal women of his earlier paintings, notably in the mystic "Beata Beatrix," after her death; and her charm supplies invisibly (particulars of her personality are omitted) much of the atmosphere of the love sonnets. Although he was in love with her as early as 1850, they were not married till 1860, and less than two years afterward she died. In his first grief, Rossetti buried with her all his manuscript poems; which were disinterred later and published in the 1870 volume.

For the reading of human destinies, old astrologers divided the heavens into twelve equal regions called "houses," the first and most powerful of which was the "house of life." The suggestion of the title is strengthened in the two headings under which Rossetti finally arranged the sonnets: Part I, Youth and Change (sonnets I-LIX); Part II, Change and Fate (sonnets LX-CI). The arrangement has no relation to the order of composition; the latter, as conjectured by the poet's brother and biographer, W. M. Rossetti, is given in the Notes of the *Complete Poetical Works*. As one keen instance of the ways of the poetic spirit, and of sorrow, it may be remarked that "The One Hope" was written before, and "Silent Noon" after, the year 1870.

Introductory Sonnet. 4. *lustral rite*: purificatory ceremonial — suggesting religious sacrifice and hope, in contrast to *dire portent*.

5. *arduous fulness*: Compare the idea of Wordsworth's sonnet "Nuns Fret Not" (page 44).

8. *orient*: This, in connection with

the preceding words, suggests both the peculiar lustre of a pearl (as in the phrase "orient pearl") and the rising of a *crest* into time's light.

(566.) 9. *its face* — — — 'tis *due*: Here the poet repeats, and in the rest of the sestet amplifies, the idea of lines 1-3.

13. *the dark wharf*: the bank of the river Styx, where the ferryman Charon embarked the shades of the dead.

V. 4. *that sea* etc.: See *Exodus*, XIV, 15-31.

XIX. Compare the idea of E. B. Browning's sonnet XXII (page 474).

XXII. 12. *Like the moon's growth* etc.: i.e., like the moon rising until its face gleams *through* the radiance which, while yet hidden, it had sent forth.

XXV. 4. *Still*: ever, continually.

7-8. *yet* — — — *unheard*: The voice of the higher Love, though it speaks to them at every meeting, is often drowned by their sheer delight in possessing each other.

12. *brake*: thicket. — The image is of the winged hour killed by some stroke of fate that keeps the two lovers at a distance from each other.

XXVII. Contrast the title and idea of "The Sea-Limits" (page 566). — Here culminates the conception of Love that appears, more or less, in every one of the preceding sonnets given in the text. — Compare the thought of Shelley's "Epipsychidion," lines 112 ff. (page 210).

4. *halcyon*: Anciently, this word referred to days of fine and calm weather about the winter *solstice*. See the note to "Epipsychidion," line 412, page 690, above.

7. *oracular*: mysteriously and divinely revealing.

8. *The evident heart* etc.: the manifested, living centre of all life, future and past. — Two corollaries of this thought are given in the ensuing sestet: life has no problems that Love cannot surmount, and the world has no value when opposed to Love.

LV. Compare the idea of Browning's "Cristina" (page 411).

4. *Bides*: endures. — *Time's weary sea*: Cf. "The Sea-Limits," lines 1-3 (page 566); and "The Blessed Damozel," lines 49-51 (page 558).

LVI. Compare Patmore's "Married Lover" (page 475).

3. *fell*: a stretch of bare, high land, such as a moor or a down.

4. *environing*: permeating and pervading.

LVII. 2. *he*: the man she loves. — *lode-star*: guiding-star (showing a *finite* way for her *infinite* love).

7. *Ice to the moon*: icy even in comparison with the cold moon.

LVIII. 2. *the Seer*: "The Seer . . . is Swedenborg" (W. M. Rossetti).

CI. What relation does the "Peace" of the octave bear to the "Hope" of the sestet?

8. *amulet*: an object (sometimes a plant) supposed to have a remedial effect on the person wearing it. — Observe the changing but unbroken series of images in lines 4-8.

10. *scriptured*: inscribed. Cf. the "figured leaf" in "In Memoriam," XLIII (page 333).

JOHN KEATS

(571.) 4. *Castalian brink*: Castalia was a fountain on Mount Parnassus sacred to the Muses; its waters had the power of inspiring those who drank. — *Latmos*: the mountain associated with the story of Endymion. Keats's poem is alluded to here and again in line 10.

11-14. *Thou whom* etc.: When near death, Keats remarked, "I feel the flowers growing over me"; and he suggested for his epitaph, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

THE KING'S TRAGEDY

On the date given in the subtitle, James was murdered in the Dominican or Black Friars' monastery in the town of Perth, which thereupon lost its status as capital of Scotland. He was buried in the Carthusian monastery or "Charterhouse" (so called through corruption of the French name of the order) which he himself had founded in 1425, and which Rossetti here merges with the Dominican monastery (line 141, etc.).

(571.) 3. *Barlass*: "Tradition says that Catherine Douglas, in honor of her heroic act when she barred the door with her arm against the murderers of James the First of Scots, received popularly the name of 'Barlass'" (Rossetti).

(572.) 28. *Henry*: King Henry Fourth.

29. *southron*: southern, i.e., English.

41. *Song*: his poem, "The King's Quair" (quire, i.e., book), in which he tells the story of his love for Lady Jane Beaufort, — including this episode of the night-gale.

52. *And Love's storm-cloud* etc.: The cloud threatening the happiness of Love may be the darkness of Hate (referring to the hate of Graeme and others for the King, as presently shown). — This and the following stanza are important for the whole mood of the poem.

72. *the leaguer* etc.: the siege of Roxburgh Castle (in 1436).

(573.) 105. *Three Estates*: nobility, clergy, and common people.

131-133. *but I see* etc.: but I see in thee merely one of God's creatures who is my mortal foe.

138. *proper*: own.

146. *the Scottish Sea*: (probably the Firth of Forth) where they were to take ship for the town of Perth.

(574.) 157. *sea-wold*: bare, uneven land by the sea.

165. *rack*: ragged, moving cloud.

173. *wraith*: an apparition having the exact likeness of a person, seen usually before or soon after his death.

176. *'Twixt the Duchray and the Dhu*: a small stream and lake, respectively, between which lies the whole of Perthshire.

179. *Inchkeith Isle*: in the Firth of Forth.

183. *Links of Forth*: the windings of the river, together with the adjacent countryside.

217. *hind*: peasant.

(575.) 251. *lift*: sky and air.

(576.) 316. *Worship, ye lovers*: The italicized verses were adapted by Rossetti from "The King's Quair." See note to line 41, above.

317. *kalends*: first period (in the

Roman calendar, the first day of the month).

343. *aventure*: fortune.

347-348. *when lessen* — — — *woful chance*: when the trouble of my bitter and woful fortune began to lessen; see line 45 ff.

(577.) 388. *pearl-tired*: pearl-adorned.

414. *the voidee-cup*: a drink of spiced wine served at bedtime.

(578.) 424. *riven and brast*: cloven and burst.

445. *dight*: prepared.

462. *As* — — — *dree*: as though to await a bitter grief.

469. *Aberdour*: on the north shore of the Firth of Forth across from Edinburgh.

(579.) 532. *heft*: half, handle.

545. *at the palm*: See line 8.

(580.) 585. *litters*: couches.

(583.) 818. *bale and ban*: evil and enmity.

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

It has been said of Morris's intimate friend Rossetti that, feeling the impulse of the Oxford Movement, he translated its religion into poetry. In the case of William Morris, there is an even closer association with that movement, in his life if not in his poetry. Coming to Oxford a decade after the deep fires of the Anglican religious revival had begun to cool, he nevertheless cherished the idea, early in his college career, of founding a monastery, and continued for some time to look to the Church for his profession. It was not the medievalism of Newman, however, that was to shape his life, but that of Carlyle and Ruskin (mainly in their social criticism) and of Rossetti (in his conception of art). For a time he studied architecture, and then, submitting completely to the influence of Rossetti, he turned to painting. Subsequently he abandoned that art likewise, in favor of the designing and manufacture of house furnishings.

Morris began to write poetry while in college, and in 1858 published his first volume, *The Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems*, in which the influence of Rossetti was marked. As an Arthurian poet, he already showed himself to be,

what the author of *Idylls of the King* was not, genuinely medieval in tone. Nine years later came *The Life and Death of Jason*, quickly followed by a great collection of tales in verse, *The Earthly Paradise*, amounting to 42,000 lines, a work which established his reputation as a major poet. But stronger in spirit is his crowning narrative poem, "Sigurd the Volsung" (1877). What most obviously unifies these and Morris's other poetic works is their reincarnation of the past. Facilely—rather too facilely—he versified mythology, legends, hero-tales, from the Greek to the Scandinavian, aiming at no "criticism of life," regarding himself, modestly, as "an idle singer of an empty day," a modern bard retelling old tales for those who cared to listen. In this general respect, he recalls Sir Walter Scott (see the biography of Scott, page 672, above). But his end-of-the-century outlook is far from Scott's simple adventurous feudalism.

Having superabundant energies and much of the humanitarian and reforming idealism of the time, he preached after Carlyle the gospel of work and after Ruskin the gospel of pleasure in work; and carried his faith into his factory for household furnishings. With the development of the industrial revolution, satisfaction in work,—in the making of serviceable and beautiful things,—largely deserted the life of the "working classes." This pleasure had existed in the past, emphatically in the thirteenth century. To revive the essentials of that early industrial order was the task that Morris kept before him, and that ultimately determined his adoption of socialistic views (see, for example, his prose romance, *News from Nowhere*, 1891, which pictures a communistic Utopia). The real basis of his socialism was æsthetic: life was needlessly and increasingly ugly, he felt—beauty must return to us, in all the things that are made for use, no less than in poems and pictures; striving for beauty, we shall attain happiness.

WINTER WEATHER

(584.) 57. *the following bell*: i.e., the twelve strokes following the "chimes" (line 51).

THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

Here, as in the preceding poem, Morris develops, in a very distinctive "weather," a medievalistic episode concerning two men and a woman. But now the two men, and especially the woman, are startlingly vivid in the foreground. Jehane, a sort of medieval Cleopatra, is designed in sharp contrast with the ideal heroine of chivalrous romance.

(585.) 52. *the Chatelet*: a dungeon in Paris.

(586.) 153. *the first fitte*: the first part (of the story).

THE EARTHLY PARADISE

After the "Apology" and "Prologue" come twenty-four stories, a pair for each month of the year. The months are introduced with lyrics, two of which are given in the text. "The Golden Apples" is the first tale under "December."

AN APOLOGY

Contrast the tone of Wordsworth's sonnet "The world is too much with us" (page 45).

(587.) 6. *Or hope again*: nor shall ye hope again.

25. *Beats with — — ivory gate*: summons up fanciful and untrue dreams. — The dwelling of Morpheus, son of Sleep and god of dreams, had also a gate of horn, through which were sent up true visions. See Spenser's "Faerie Queene," Book First, I, 39-44.

27-28. *To those — — empty day*: Cf. the second stanza.

41. *ravening*: preying rapaciously.

PROLOGUE

7. *below bridge*: below London bridge.

(588.) 12. *napery*: linen.

14-15. *Geoffrey — — lading*: In 1374, Chaucer was appointed comptroller of customs at the port of London.

OCTOBER

4. *wold*: a tract of open, uncultivated country, such as moor or down.

(588.) 6. *stead*: homestead.

8. *Come down*: i.e., from the cliff or hill overlooking the sea.

NOVEMBER

As he turned in the preceding poem from "the unchanging sea," so here the poet can find no comfort in the still moonlight of November, "the changeless seal [i.e. conclusion] of change." For though irked by the changefulness of life, and allured by the idea of rest, he shrinks from the stillness of "dread eternity."—Contrast such poems as Christina Rossetti's "A Soul" (page 555) and "Rest" (page 554).

7. *these four walls*: i.e., his study.—The poet is addressing himself after a long day's work.

20. *void patience*: The patience of eternity seems empty or meaningless to his "restless heart" (line 21).—In the preceding poem, the patience required by earthly life seemed irksome (line 16).

THE GOLDEN APPLES

This tale is perhaps not so well known as others in *The Earthly Paradise*. It lacks the plot-interest of "Atalanta's Race"; the force of "The Lovers of Gudrun"; the weird lure that catches the reader in many of the stories; and, above all, the theme of love and death which chiefly fascinated Morris himself. In his handling of that great theme, however, Morris suffers from comparison with profounder poets; whereas his treatment of the episode of Hercules and the Golden Apples is finely distinctive. Here, his cheery delight in life—too often submerged—has freshest play; and the flowing, decorative charm of his style, elsewhere cramped by plot-necessities, is given right wind and weather by the fluent and picturesque old sea-god, Nereus.

(589.) 45. *Fate — — — fire*: In agony from the clinging shirt poisoned with Nessus' blood, he caused himself to be consumed with fire.

(590.) 100. *the sweet singer*: Arion. When he jumped into the sea, to escape murder at the hands of sailors, he was borne to

land by dolphins that had gathered around the ship to hear his music.

(591.) 102-109. *How in the mid sea etc.*: When abducted by pirates, Bacchus (Dionysus) drove them into madness by performing forest-wonders, one of which was a growth of ivy about the ship.

110-112. *how, wild and white etc.*: When the race of man became degenerate, Zeus destroyed it with a nine days' flood.

115. *Prometheus' son*: Deucalion. He and his wife Pyrrha were saved from the flood in a boat built by him, which finally came to rest on Mount Parnassus.

180. *what that evil drew*: what brought that misfortune.

(593.) 225. *fellows*: friends.—Observe the purpose of the shift, here, in narrative standpoint.

(595.) 305. *daughters of old Hesperus*: hence called "Hesperides." Another account makes these nymphs the offspring, not of Hesperus (the evening star), but of Atlas (the mountain in northwest Africa), and places their garden at his foot. Hera (Juno) appointed them guardians, together with the dragon Ladon, of the golden apples which Earth gave her at her marriage with Zeus (Jupiter). The story rose from the paradisiac yearning that belongs to the human heart everywhere, and that created, indeed, Morris's "Earthly Paradise." The garden of the Hesperides, the Greco-Roman Eden, echoed with the sweet and happy singing of the maidens (cf. lines 309-310, etc.).

346. *the straw flare out*: i.e., a fire in the dry grass.

(596.) 364. *his gold fell*: See lines 32-34.

372-378. *But this I know etc.*: Contrast the mood of the two preceding poems. This stanza expresses the firmest faith that Morris himself attained to. It entered into his socialism and his view of poetry. While studying the Icelandic mythology in preparation for "Sigurd the Volsung" and other works, he said: "Think of the joy we have in praising great men, and how we turn their stories over and over, and fashion their lives for our joy: and this also we ourselves may give to the world. This seems to me pretty much the religion of the Northmen. I think one

could be a happy man if one could hold it, in spite of the wild dreams and dreadful imaginings that hung about it here and there" (see J. W. Mackail's *Life of William Morris*).

(596.) 396-397. *Ah! craving* — — — *more fair*: Even if their cold nature had been warmed, at this opportunity, by a yearning for human kindness, etc., such yearning could hardly have increased their great beauty.

(597.) 444. *a greater sire*: Zeus.— His mother was Alcmena, wife of King Amphitryon of Thebes.

451. *Eurystheus*: Cf. lines 3-4. Hercules was "fated" at birth, through an oath obtained from Zeus by a stratagem of jealous Hera, to be the "thrall" of King Eurystheus; and it was at this king's bidding that he performed the famous twelve labors, one of which was fetching the golden apples.

(598.) 466. *women fair*: The fifty sea-nymphs called Nereides (Nereids) were daughters and companions of Nereus.

477. *Nereus*: Like Proteus, he would give true information and aid to anyone who could seize and hold him in spite of his shifting forms. For his timidity, see also line 253 ff. The Mediterranean was his realm: Morris finely associates him with its weathers, and its lore (see line 99 ff), while making him primarily a very human old man.

481. *shifting* — — — *dale*: the rolling waves.

(599.) 505. *Kinsman*: because both were related to Zeus; cf. line 48.

523. *ness*: headland.

525. *Bedight*: bedecked.

545. *Not yet*: At death (see line 45 and the note) Hercules was conveyed to Olympus and became a god.

548. *There whence I came*: referring to his divine origin.

551. *But*: but that (following "tell," line 547).

LOVE IS ENOUGH

(600.) 43. *Though* — — — *shadows*: Cf. "In Memoriam," CXXIII, lines 5-8 (page 358).

THE VOICE OF TOIL

13-16. *Where fast and faster* etc.: Cf. the last stanza of the "Apology" and opening lines of the "Prologue" of *The Earthly Paradise* (page 587).

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909)

Of Welsh descent, Meredith was born at Portsmouth and educated in Germany. Having lost the small means that he inherited, he struggled for a time in the law, and for some years as a journalist. His first printed work was a poem, his first volume *Poems* (1851), and he continued to write poetry for sixty years. In prose fiction, his first work was an Oriental fantasy, *The Shaving of Shagpat* (1856); and his first decisive success a significant novel, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859). His novels as a whole form a brilliant social comedy, centering in *The Egoist* (1879). Behind that comedy, and behind Meredith's copious wit in his circle of friends, there went on a train of solitary meditation that found expression in his verse.

The 1851 volume of poems, containing "Love in the Valley" (page 601), was followed, after an interval of eleven years, by *Modern Love*, a sequence of sonnet-like poems (one of which is given on page 608); and then from time to time came other volumes, including *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*, *Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life*, *A Reading of Earth*, *A Reading of Life*. These titles themselves indicate broadly the texture of his poetry, which is critical and philosophic in the warp, but keenly joyous in the woof. He is a poet of nature, giving us intimately the rolling, wooded landscapes of the South of England where he spent nearly the whole of his life, as Wordsworth gave us the hills and lakes of the North—but interpreting the external world with a mind saturated with social and evolutionary ideas, as Wordsworth had not done. It is a rather grim, hard-won "Joy" that he finds and conveys to us by his faith in "brain," the highest phase of the evolutionary process. In his reading of Earth, there

is no basis for religionistic comforts — "These are our sensual dreams," he avers — but there is firm basis for the belief that here in this world, through constant struggle, "from flesh to spirit man grows." Growth in each individual is only a part, though a very essential part, of Life's development in nature and mankind as a whole. In such growth we, as individuals, can learn to find our happiness, by subduing — not without the aid of the "Comic Spirit" — the old cravings of "Self." The way of wisdom, of honest obedience to brain, is to suffer none of the old delusions, the old "Legends," but to accept the stringent "medical herb" that Earth proffers, — the strength, the stimulant, that we win when in real (not sentimental) contact with "our only visible friend." We are to acknowledge our stern mother, and to love her unreservedly; awake to her beauty, responsive to her keen vitality, and aware that beneath her sternness is a deep heart of joy.

Naturally the general reader has not been captivated by such stoicism, conveyed as it is in a style compressed, contorted, often obscure, — a style like nature's cliffs and caves, and entwined branches, and great roots groping into the soil. "Thousands who have lived by Wordsworth's gift of faith, Arnold's of endurance, Tennyson's of wisdom, Browning's of joy, will turn away from this proffer of strength as one not receivable by human sorrow till other gifts have gone before it" (John Bailey). Certain "other gifts," no doubt, helped Meredith himself to grow — to come with fine wholeness of spirit through his early struggles and unhappy love (see the introductory note under "I Play for Seasons," below); through his continued lack of public recognition; and through his loss of great domestic happiness in the death of his second wife (1885). His poem "A Faith on Trial" (1888) should be read by all who wish to see his creed, and his manhood, confronting his personal grief. But there are times when any reader, whatever his prevailing outlook on life, may find delight and sustenance in Meredith's strength of mind and will, his swift wit, his unflinching vision.

Moreover, it is becoming apparent that

his poetry gives the profoundest form of that "Naturalism" — or "Vitalism," as it is sometimes called — which, in one form or another, has been the most persistent power in literature since 1860. That power is being worshipped assiduously by the "new poets" and "new novelists" of England and America at the present time. To cope with Meredith's poetic thought and imagination is to penetrate more deeply into our own. Incidentally, certain of the extracts from his poetry given in this book will be found to illuminate many later poems, from Swinburne to Masfield, as suggested throughout the notes below. In studying Meredith's poetic thought, perhaps the main thing to keep in mind is that, in reacting from the transcendental ideas of his predecessors, which seemed to him debilitating, he stretched the concept of "Earth" or "Nature" to include high values which have from of old been assigned to transcendent powers.

LOVE IN THE VALLEY

The daily and seasonal changes in the South England landscape that Meredith loved are here woven into an idyl so originally musical that Tennyson, among others, was at once captivated by it. For a *dramatic* treatment of young love in the presence of nature, see the noted chapter xv of Meredith's *Richard Feverel*.

(601.) 32. *Off a sunny border*: along the edge of a cloud's shadow, during a sunshower. The cloud swings along (line 31) followed by the sunshine, which glints on the flowers and hail.

36. *eve-jar*: night-jar; a bird of the goatsucker family.

(602.) 46. *morning light*: in contrast to the sunset (line 42).

52. *like* — — *yew*: like yewberries threading the dark yew-tree with color.

55-56. *Maiden still etc.*: Cf. Tennyson's "Tithonus," line 34 ff (page 313).

61-64. *Ay, but shows the South-west etc.*: The same phenomenon, but with the clouds cleared by the wind, is used in section LXXXVI of "In Memoriam" (page 345).

74. *Low-lidded twilight etc.*: the

morning twilight peering low over the rising ground. — The first version of the poem indicates that Meredith had here in mind the same dawn as in the preceding stanza.

(602.) 75. *Rounding on thy breast*: circling above the "valley's brim," which appears as the breast of dawn.

77. *the rayless planet*: the morning-star bereft of its rays by the dawn; cf. lines 49-51.

(603.) 102. *blushing eglantine*: sweetbrier rose.

117. *yaffle*: the green woodpecker; the commonest species in England, and called by many names, including "yaffle" (from its cry).

(604.) 130. *link*: See note on "The King's Tragedy," line 183, page 784, above.

162. *Clipped*: inclosed. The sun is seen at the end of the valley, coming down on to the "violet-shaded snow."

165. *print-branches*: the shadows of the beech-tree's branches printed on the snow by the moonlight.

(605.) 178. *new surprise*: newly adopted surprise. She raises her lashes in the look of wondering inquiry proper to the visit of a stranger. But like him, she had fallen in love through sight (line 180), and her friends' hints have prepared her for his visit (line 181). — In the first version of the poem, the lover meets and woos the girl from the beginning; but she is reluctant to give up her freedom. In his revision, Meredith dropped the wooing, but retained and developed her maiden independence (lines 9-32); hence the compression and suddenness of the present stanza. But see lines 81-88.

204. *the whitebeam*: a small tree the leaves of which have a silvery down on their under side.

JUGGLING JERRY

Compare "Northern Farmer: Old Style" (page 386). Which is the better poem?

(606.) 16. *a Juggler*: Death.

25. *cricket*: play cricket.

27. *whip off* etc.: When the batsman is not in place, the wicket-keeper may put him "out" by knocking off the bails (cross-pieces) with the ball.

45. *professor*: of juggling.

48. *this*: his ending.

49. *from my topsy-turvy*: i.e., from the diversified viewpoint of the juggler's profession.

67. *bolus*: large pill.

(607.) 81. *chirper*: cheering glass.

95. *it*: the "change" (line 96), i.e., from life to death.

ODE TO THE SPIRIT OF EARTH

This poem marks a divergence from the Victorian view of Nature, and a resumption of the earlier Romanticist view, modified by the advance of the idea of natural evolution. (Passages of Wordsworth and Shelley, particularly, should be reviewed in connection with this and other poems of Part Three that deal with Life in man and nature.) The new attitude toward nature is part of what has been called "Naturalism" or "Vitalism" — in contrast with the esthetic outlook of the Pre-Raphaelites and others on the one hand and, on the other, with the conventionalism of everyday men. The term perhaps indicates the predominant tendency of literature during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Walt Whitman is the most influential prophet of "Vitalism"; Meredith, its most subtle and balanced exponent.

143. *am I*: if I am.

147-148. *With faith — — living fire*: With faith that, though urging toward the future, fosters the fire of life in the present.

150. *vagueness in the form*: Cf. "In Memoriam," xxxiii, lines 3-4 (page 331).

156. *Fixed*: i.e., stationed and growing like the tree (line 154), and like Earth's life in general.

158. *Bacchante*: priestess of Bacchus.

I PLAY FOR SEASONS

Modern Love tells, in fifty sixteen-line sections, the story of a husband and wife whose love gradually declines because they fail to foster it and make it grow:

"Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
They wandered once; clear as the dew on
flowers.

But they fed not on the advancing hours:
Their hearts held cravings for the buried
day.

Then each applied to each the fatal knife,
Deep questioning, which probes to endless
dole.

Ah! what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life!"

(From section L)

Meredith drew upon his own experience: his early marriage (1849) with a daughter of Thomas Love Peacock proved to be unhappy and, though it was ended only by the death of Mrs. Meredith (1860), after the first few years the two lived separately. But the story of the poem is not autobiographic; and its attitude is large. The title intends a contrast with romantic love-tragedies:

"In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:
We are betrayed by what is false within."

(From section XLIII)

In the present section the husband, having lost "love's great bliss" (line 14), seeks consolation in the thought of Nature's purpose and method. What passages of the "Ode to the Spirit of Earth" (page 607) are recalled?

(608.) 15. *forever*: is here a noun, subject of the verb "whirls."

THE LARK ASCENDING

Contrast Wordsworth's and Shelley's poems on the skylark (pages 51, 201).

14. *her*: the spirit of Earth, or Nature, within us; cf. lines 17-18.

25. *Impelled*: qualifies "he" (line 19).

31-36. *For all to hear and all to know . . . to hear . . . And know*: These words give the grammatical structure of the phrase.

(609.) 44. *argentine*: silver-like substance.

56. *The best in us to him akin*: What is it?

61. *from the sea*: i.e., from the vast unknown, beyond the everyday life of Earth; cf. lines 65-66.

91. *from failing blood*: when passion and vitality are becoming weak.

96. *taint of personality*: egotism.

105-110. *Yield substance* etc.:

These workers, though not themselves poets, have the stuff of life that is sweet for poetry to celebrate. Poetry gives us a fresh revelation of them, lifting them high like a mountain ensphered by blue heaven, because they deeply love earth.

112. *pass*: do without.

114. *In the brain's reflex* etc.: in the human mind's reflection (i.e., interpretation) of the skylark.—For the bird's "self-forgetfulness," see line 27 ff.

(610.) 122. *More spacious* etc.: Making the more spacious region (and vision) more akin to our earth; cf. line 119.

EARTH AND MAN

2. *dint the breast*: as a mother suckling her child.

10-11. *whose* — — — *him*: which endowed him with the natural powers that first started him in the race of life.

13-14. *His* — — — *strife*: The urgency of primal desire in man shows that he, more than any other creature, is made for struggle.

15-16. *let* — — — *accursed*: resign life to the lower creatures.

19. *gnome*: an earth-spirit.—In seeking metals for weapons, early man opens up mysterious questions as to his own earthly origin; see the next two stanzas.

23. *ring*: circle of activity.

51-52. *And sight* — — — *those folds*: He must see his own dullness before he can begin to see the real meaning of Earth's symbols (lines 45-48).

(611.) 59. *her cherishing of her best-endowed*: In the Darwinian realm, this would be the law of "the survival of the fittest." But the very difference in phraseology reminds us that for Meredith, unlike Darwin, Nature has Spirit and purpose.

65. *read her*: interpret her as.

66. *the passion Self*: the passion of Selfishness,—imaged in the next two lines as a luring "devil" and an obscuring "hood."—For the opposite quality, see the

preceding poem, line 116 and context (page 609).

(611.) 75. *a shingle-grave*: the rough and deadly shore of Earth. — The idea of the sea from which man, the "wave," is tumbled, prepares for "the Invisible" of the next stanza.

80. *For little signs*: in return for little miracles.

83. *it*: the slaughter of nature, i.e., the breach of her laws; referred to in line 85 as "This miracle."

86-87. *himself doth* — — — *his worth*: he maintains his belief in this miracle (i.e., long after the "signs" have ended) by claiming that his case is exceptional on account of his worth.

100. *Her purest fires*: such as devotion and reverence. — Observe the spiritual qualities and purposes which the poet, from here on, attributes to Earth (Nature); and see the last sentence of the biography, above.

111-112. *With grief for grief* etc.: grieving that he does not perceive her near presence in his grief; see the next stanza.

(612.) 147. *him*: the "Self" (line 138). The idea is that Self may be sublimated and enlightened (not ascetically crushed), and so become "nigh divine" (line 150).

158. *his gapped readings* etc.: i.e., his crude ideas of religious reward and punishment.

165. *her just Lord*: i.e., the true God who rules through law, — in distinction from the "Invisible," etc., as conceived by human superstition (lines 30, 78, 92, 157). Cf. "Ode to the Spirit of Earth," lines 168-174 (page 607).

Compare Meredith's view of "god and Nature" with that given in "Tintern Abbey," lines 93-111 (page 8), and "In Memoriam," cxxiv (page 358).

175. *Two-minded*: two-minded. — For the rest of the sentence, cf. "Ode to the Spirit of Earth," lines 154-155 (page 607).

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

2. *his dark dominion*: the earth.

(613.) 9. *wider zones*: the regions of space, — in contrast with the earth's zones through which he has flown, from south to

north, aiming toward the pole of the universe as anciently conceived. — The wider regions remind him of the vast Chaos through which he fell after his defeat in Heaven's battle.

SENSE AND SPIRIT

Compare "Earth and Man," lines 117-135 (page 611).

1-6. *The senses* etc.: The senses cannot give us our true relation with Nature. For either they shrink from her ("loving Earth . . . ill"), and impel the mind to shape up superstitious doctrines in religion; or they are allured by her, and impel us to follow a vague nature-idealism that overlooks uncongenial facts.

4. *does*: The verb is completed by "light" (i.e., illuminate), understood from the preceding line.

13-14. *Solves* — — — *own*: is solved in the human spirit when this has been so fashioned by Nature, through the struggle of living, that it can truly interpret *her* spirit.

EARTH'S SECRET

14. *For Earth* etc.: Nature, the nourisher, gives us not only physical but also spiritual vitality, to animate the "solidity and vision" (lines 10-11) we win from History.

THE SPIRIT OF SHAKESPEARE

Contrast this view of Shakespeare with that given in Arnold's sonnet (page 499).

7. *the God*: Neptune.

12-14. *bid sick Philosophy* etc.: Cf. the last three lines of the preceding sonnet.

(614.) 17. *breast*: i.e., Earth's.

19. *that little twist of brain*: such as the self-love of Malvolio in Twelfth Night, for example.

23. *rigid harridan*: stiffly conventional old woman.

26-27. *Would ring* — — — *it caused*: would draw from Shakespeare a series of musical verses representing it in its true bearings.

AN ORSON OF THE MUSE

The subject is Walt Whitman. — In the famous medieval romance of two brothers, "Valentine and Orson," the one is carried off by a king and the other by a bear; and they became the types, respectively, of courtesy and uncouthness.

(614.) 6. *rock-sources*: rocky springs.

7. *civil limitation*: the conventions of civilized life. — In the next line Meredith comically suggests that even the nymphs, though creatures of Nature, are affected by "civil limitation." When he deals seriously with this subject, his doctrine is that the spirit of Nature desires to win, through mankind, the best values of "civil limitation"; as in "Earth and Man," lines 105-108 (page 611).

9. *blows*: spouts, like a strong spring; cf. lines 5-6.

11. *her train*: her retinue in contrast with "her son" (lines 1-2).

13. *the tidewaves*: The "rock-source" is now imaged as flowing down into the sea of human life. — The thought is: much that is fruitful and precious in Whitman's inspiration must go lost in life's "tidewaves," lacking the buoyancy of creative form ("vessel built for sea").

THE WORLD'S ADVANCE

9. *the memorable Lady*: Mrs. Browning used the image of a spiral line for the aspiration of Art, near the end of Book Fourth of "Aurora Leigh."

11. *That figure on a flat*: i.e., a zigzag movement along the level, instead of the ascending spiral.

THE DISCIPLINE OF WISDOM

In "Sense and Spirit" (page 613) the principle of struggle is applied to faith; here, to wisdom.

(615.) 7. *To live and shine*: i.e., instead of shining without living, as in the preceding image.

9-10. *your hewing* — — — *the mute*: The image seems to be of a shepherd cutting a path through thickets to a sheep-pasture; cf. line 13. — The "mute" flock represents ordinary mankind.

THE GARDEN OF EPICURUS

Epicurus (c. 341-270 B.C.) taught for almost forty years in his own garden at Athens. His serene and temperate philosophy was degraded by so-called Epicureans who gave themselves up to sensuality; and it was attacked by the Stoics. See also the note on "Juan and Haidée," lines 1649-1650 (page 680, above).

9. *would* — — — *verge*: would, onward, illuminate the very last horizon; i.e., be mankind's all-sufficient guide.

12. *Babels*: In contrast with "wilds" in the next line, this suggests the confused and selfish struggles in *civilized* society. For "Babel," see *Genesis*, xi, 1-9. — For Jesus' "scourge," see *John*, ii, 13-17.

TO J. M.

3-4. *no change* — — — *and pride*: They shut their eyes to all change, except that which takes the violent form of battle or revolution.

5. *Our faith* — — — *a tide*: The faith of liberal and enlightened men is not borne to its goal on a natural tide of change; it is theirs to work for and gradually establish (cf. line 8).

6-7. *And whither* — — — *abjure rapacity*: whether mankind is *destined* to decay if not impelled by predatory selfishness. — See Meredith's view of the "Self" in previous poems.

9. *hard flock*: hard and fast Tories; cf. lines 1-4. — Morley, who had graduated from Oxford eight years earlier, was to become a leader of advanced Liberalism in Parliament.

12. *Roland*: the strong hero of medieval romance, and of Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso."

ON THE DANGER OF WAR

In 1885 the Gladstone Government seemed on the brink of war with Russia on account of her advance in central Asia and attitude concerning the Afghan boundary.

(616.) 5-6. *Dark looms* — — — *devil's trick*: Even though the cause be good, the necessity is very doubtful, but the old devil within us wants to seize the chance.

SOCIETY

(616.) 7. *and* — — — *drape*: and to clothe their hot passions, — i.e., keep them within the limits of decency.

13. *Earth gives* — — — *no base*: See the note on "civil limitation" under "An Orson of the Muse," above.

MEN AND MAN

Mankind is either tossed by warring passions or quiet in stagnation — when viewed as an aggregate of actual selves. But beyond these may be discerned a single and better self of mankind. Compare the last stanza of "In Memoriam," cvi (page 354).

16-17. *A sluggish fen* etc.: Cf. lines 2-3. — This closing stanza answers the question touched upon in the sonnet "To J. M.," lines 6-8 (page 615).

MANFRED

6. *grilled*: were in a broil or tumult (suggesting indigestion).

8. *With*: follows "feud" (not "summoned").

12. *she pictorially attacked*: Nature tried to conquer his melancholy by confronting him with her fine scenes. — The suggestion is that Nature in Byron's drama "Manfred" (page 130) is picturesque rather than real.

WHIMPER OF SYMPATHY

(617.) 11. *wrinkle*: i.e., of sorrow.

14. *twinkle*: sparkle (in the drop of dew, line 12).

HARD WEATHER

3. *shaws*: groves.

9. *shrews*: scolds.

10. *At gallop, clumped*: galloping in clumps or clusters. — *croft*: pasture.

16. *Tritonly*: like a Triton (sea-god), through the crests of the waves.

24. *the robber's flight*: i.e., the sweep of the wind.

25. *an infant sky*: i.e., a loop of blue sky.

27-28. *Black while* etc.: While the

"swarms" of small, low clouds are causing a quick alternation of light and darkness (lines 23-26), gradually the *main* "swathe" of cloud, above, is closing black over the loop of blue. — On account of the increased gloom, the "witches" (line 23) now appear as "Furies" (line 29).

53. *the mould*: that in which Nature shaped the man of strong "lungs and thews" (line 48). — She aims now at strength of mind and spirit.

63. *String us*: nerve us.

67. *feel us*: we may feel ourselves.

68. *drill*: rill, streamlet.

(618.) 74. *her source*: Cf. "Earth and Man," lines 125-132 (page 612).

78. *Not disconnected*: Supply "from her" (i.e., Earth, Nature).

84-85. *the welling* — — — *The mirror*: the stream that springs from her, and thereafter mirrors her.

87. *Benignest kinship*: man's kinship with that which is benignest in Nature. This appears when strong and brainy men realize that Nature intends *them* to help the weak, — whom she herself must neglect in her very effort to develop, through hard struggle, the "stouter stock" (line 98) of which such humane giants may be born. — It is apparent that for Meredith the term "Earth" comprises: (1) the actual processes of Nature, (2) the spiritual aim that Nature serves. Compare the dualism in "Men and Man" (page 616).

105-108. *But even as she* etc.: As Nature has risen through barren and crude forms of life to fruitful and high ones, so the human soul can rise through mental strength to nobility. — Compare "In Memoriam," cxviii (page 357), noting the difference in emphasis.

THE QUESTION WHITHER

The same question as in "Crossing the Bar" (page 403) and Browning's "Epilogue" (page 472), but differently answered. Compare Arnold's "A Wish" (page 544).

10. *cramped to station*: stationed always in the same bodies; cf. lines 1-2.

12. *all sensation*: all creatures that have senses.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWIN-
BURNE (1837-1909)

Of wealthy and aristocratic parentage, Swinburne was educated, as Shelley had been, at Eton and Oxford. Like Shelley he took no degree, but unlike Shelley he spent four years at college and distinguished himself as a student. He was always an insatiable reader; in childhood he came to know the Bible much as Ruskin knew it, and early he immersed himself in English poetry, especially in that of the Elizabethan dramatists. At college he devoted himself to Latin, Greek, French, and Italian, with particular reference to poetic form. Early and late he was warmly attached to Landor, a profound classicist with a romantic temper, and to Hugo, whose vast energy caused Swinburne to regard him as the greatest poet of modern times. The main influence upon Swinburne was that of books: and he became, in his mature years, one of the most learned of all the English poets.

Though acquainted with Morris and Burne-Jones in his Oxford days, and responsive to the compelling personality of Rossetti, Swinburne quickly passed beyond Pre-Raphaelite influences to thinner but more sweeping modes of expression. Having destroyed his early verse, he began publication, at the close of his college years, with two plays, *The Queen-Mother* and *Rosamond*, based on Elizabethan models. Five years later, in 1865, *Atalanta in Calydon* brought him a sudden and secure reputation. It was the first fruit of his classical studies and ardors; it was the work of a poet who could write admirable verse in both Greek and Latin, who was deeply interested in the formal aspect of ancient drama, and who loved the antique world. In its genuinely Greek framework, it was closer to Matthew Arnold's *Merope* than to the Hellenism of the early poets of the century—but only in the firm framework; for otherwise, in its diction, its emotional quality, its weakness as drama, its brilliant success in the airy swing of its choruses (the two finest of which are given on pages 618-619), it follows the romantic, especially the Shelleyan, tradition. Misunderstanding his own powers, he contin-

ued to regard himself as a dramatist, writing play after play; but he was born a lyrical poet, as was shown conclusively by his collections of lyrics, beginning, in the year after *Atalanta*, with the first series of *Poems and Ballads*. Effortless singing, rapidity and fire, splendor of language, astonishing mastery of a wide variety of metrical forms,—these captivated, and still captivate, many readers, and make large amends for the fluid monotony of his style and the inadequacy of his vision of life. The dominant moods and ideas of his lyrics are already present in this early volume: his love of the sea, his passionate paganism, his defiance of convention, his anti-ecclesiasticism, his enthusiasm for political liberty,—though full expression of some of them came later, in *Songs before Sunrise* (1871); *Poems and Ballads*, second series (1878), third series (1889); and other volumes.

Attacked for his eroticism and other unorthodoxies in the first series of *Poems and Ballads*, Swinburne was the subject of a vehement and prolonged controversy, in the course of which he defended himself in a prose work, *Notes on Poems and Reviews*. Among his other prose works are *William Blake, a Critical Essay*, a series of Elizabethan studies,—on Chapman, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson,—and *A Study of Victor Hugo*.

CHORUSES FROM ATALANTA

(618.) 66. *The mother of months*: the moon.

70-72. *Is half assuaged* etc.: Philomela, daughter of a king of Attica, was ravished by her sister Procne's husband, Tereus, king of Thrace; who thereupon cut out her tongue to prevent her betraying him. After a time ("tongueless vigil") she managed to make her wrong known to Procne, and the two, in revenge, killed Itylus, son of Tereus by Procne. When the fleeing sisters were overtaken by Tereus, they prayed the gods to change them into birds: Procne became the swallow, and Philomela the nightingale. The story is in Ovid's "Metamorphoses." In Swinburne's lyric, "Itylus" (in *Poems and*

Ballads, first series), the nightingale — not the light-hearted swallow, though she had been his mother — remembers the slain boy with remorseful grief forever.

(619.) 74. *Maiden* etc.: Artemus (Diana), maiden goddess of the moon, and fleet patroness of the hunt.

102. *the oat*: a reed-pipe, made of an oat-straw. — The line means that pastoral music is now more in favor than that of the lyre (a harp-like instrument).

108. *Maenad* . . . *Bassarid*: varieties of bacchante, i.e., a female bacchanal (devotee of Bacchus); see lines 112-113.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

Compare Tennyson's "Lotos-Eaters" (page 303). Here, the mood is the deathly languor of the human spirit when wearied of *all* things. — Proserpine (in Greek, Persephone) was wife of Pluto and majestic queen of Hades. Swinburne has in mind the groves sacred to her (in the Homeric conception) at the western extremity of the earth, through which there was passage to the underworld of the dead, called the house of Persephone.

(620.) 4. *dreams of dreams*: i.e., reflections of life's dreams.

5-22. *I watch* etc.: Looking back from the neighborhood of death, the poet conceives the human world as a thing of weak dreams, — the growing fields of spring, the human joys and sorrows associated therewith, and the strivings of men on the seas.

27. *poppies*: the flowers of oblivion, sacred to Proserpine, who is often represented with a garland of them on her head (line 50). Their buds are "grapes" for her wine (lines 28-32).

33-40. *Pale, without name* etc.: Such "harvesting" is the sequel of the green fields of lines 5-8.

(621.) 59-64. *Forgets the earth* etc.: Proserpine was daughter of Demeter, mother-earth, from whom she was stolen by Pluto, and at whose insistence she was afterwards permitted to spend part of each year in the upper-world. Her story images the mystery of natural life, in its continual decay and renewal.

HYMN TO PROSERPINE

Christianity was recognized as the religion of the Roman state in the early years of the fourth century. The words used as motto, — "Thou hast conquered, Galilean," — are ascribed by Christian tradition to the dying Emperor Julian (331-363), who had been educated in the Christian faith but reverted to paganism. The poem is supposed to be chanted by a Roman poet, and to express the attitude of decadent paganism, — the feeling that the old gods are lovely, though "bitter" (see lines 8, 12, 20, 22). In spirit, the poem is closely akin to the erotic pieces in *Poems and Ballads*, — "Laus Veneris," "Faustine," "Dolores," "Hesperia," etc.; but it surpasses them in poetic intensity and beauty.

2. *maiden*: i.e., before her marriage with Pluto; see the last note on the preceding poem, above.

9. *the bays*: the poet's crown of laurel leaves. The laurel (i.e., bay-tree) was sacred to Apollo, the god of song (line 7).

(622.) 43. *racks and rods*: persecution and asceticism (cf. line 65).

44. *O ghastly glories* etc.: referring to the veneration of saints' relics.

46. *look to the end*: What he foresees is the subject of the next two paragraphs.

(623.) 65. *the deep sea*: i.e., the life of the world, as symbolized by the great wave (lines 54-64).

73. *Cytherean*: Venus (Aphrodite). She is alluded to throughout the ensuing lines in contrast with the Virgin Mary; and much is made of the myth that she was born of the foam of the sea.

91-92. *But I turn* etc.: Cf. lines 1-6. (624.) 108. *A little soul* etc.: adapted from Epictetus.

HERTHA

Hertha was the old Teutonic goddess of the fertile and growing earth (from which her name was derived), corresponding to the Greek Demeter and Roman Ceres. — Compare "Earth and Man" (page 610), and see the introductory note on the "Ode to the Spirit of Earth," page 789, above;

but observe that Swinburne's conception of Life is more monistic than Meredith's, and that his mood more closely resembles Shelley's.

An illustration of the effect of the new "naturalism" upon lesser personages is a sonnet by Mrs. Emily Pfeiffer (1827-1890), on "The Gospel of Dread Tidings," in which she fears that a "sad creed" is quenching the "law" of Christ, the "highest man." In another sonnet, however, her thought becomes quite harmonious with that of "Hertha"; she addresses, with ecstasy, personified "Evolution":—

"Hunger that strivest in the restless arms
Of the sea-flower, that drivest rooted things

To break their moorings, that unfoldst wings

In creatures to be rapt above thy harms;
Hunger, of whom the hungry-seeming waves

Were the first ministers, till, free to range,

Thou madest the Universe thy park and grange,—

What is it thine insatiate heart still craves,

Sacred disquietude, divine unrest?

Maker of all that breathes the breath of life,

No unthrift greed spurs thine unflagging zest,

No lust self-slaying, hounds thee to the strife;

Thou art the Unknown God on whom we wait:

Thy path the course of our unfolded fate."

(624.) 15. *before God was, I am*: Swinburne has in mind the Biblical use of "I am" in connection with the idea of God; see *Exodus*, III, 14; *John*, VIII, 58.

31-35. *But what thing* etc.: Cf. "Earth and Man," lines 113-116 (page 611).

40. *the dust which is God*: the life-producing soil; cf. the next stanza.

(625.) 64. *tripod*: a metaphor for altar or priest. — The priestess of Apollo at Delphi sat on a tripod (three-legged stool) when receiving the god's oracular messages.

67. *Born, and not made*: The idea is that Earth (Nature) came into existence by gradual, organic processes.

71. *A creed is a rod*: i.e., a thing that restrains and chastens; cf. line 65 of the preceding poem.

72. *a crown*: alluding to the conception of God as King.

88. *the lights*: religious dogmas.

99. *The life-tree*: In his description of it, Swinburne apparently has in mind the tree Igdrasil of Scandinavian mythology; it had been powerfully represented by Carlyle in the first chapter of *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841).

(627.) 176-200. *Lo, winged with world's wonders* etc.: For the millennial ideas of the closing passage, cf. Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," I, 262-301 (page 186), and the selections from Acts III and IV (pages 196, 197).

193-194. *And the love — — — and pole*: the love granted by truth (i.e., love based on true knowledge) is Man's guide and centre.

TO WALT WHITMAN

Compare Meredith's view of Whitman in "An Orson of the Muse" (page 614).

— The thought is essentially that of the preceding poem: the "earth-god Freedom" may be considered the chief aspect of "Hertha," treated here intensively (from line 63 on). Swinburne's valuation of freedom is like Shelley's; see, for example, "Life May Change" (page 228).

(628.) 61-63. *Would fain grow men* etc.: Cf. lines 151-160 of the preceding poem.

89. *godlike*: From here on, the word "God" and its derivatives are used in a sense quite different from that given them in the preceding poem.

115-116. *Not as one man* etc.: The idea is that the sufferings of the "earth-god Freedom" include those of Christ but are not confined to them. — Compare the stanza as a whole with the final stanza.

125. *the stripe*: the stroke of a lash.
(629.) 130. *metres*: Cf. lines 134-135.

COR CORDIUM

The title ("heart of hearts") is Leigh Hunt's epitaph for Shelley, inscribed above his grave in Rome.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

(631.) 80. *Death lies dead:* because Death implies change and decay; cf. lines 65-68.

THE ROUNDEL

The roundel, or rondel, is a poem in a fixed form, borrowed from the French, consisting of thirteen or fourteen lines on two rimes. Swinburne uses his own arrangement of the rimes, as illustrated in this poem.

THE SUNBOWS

For the idea, cf. the last stanza of Shelley's "Cloud" (page 200).

HOPE AND FEAR

A partial criterion for Swinburne's sonnets may be derived from a comparison of this one with Keats's sonnet "When I Have Fears" (page 238), which has a similar theme.

ON THE DEATH OF BROWNING

(634.) 6. "*Look forth*": referring to the title of "Prospice" (page 469).

JAMES THOMSON: THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT.

The work of James Thomson (1834-1882) is the first signal expression—and remains the deepest expression—of the pessimism that runs through the poetry of the late nineteenth century. This dark strain, generally speaking, is the sequel of that initial optimism that found its most ecstatic voice in Shelley. In the middle period of the century, the idea of progress or development, still in the foreground, was confronted with the old duality of human experience,—the conflict of heart and reason, tradition and freedom, "God and Nature." Of the later poets, only Meredith proved intellectually equal to the task of continuing the greater Victorians' effort to see life on both sides, to see it "steadily and whole." And the Victorian view of life came to seem too labored, measured, and ambiguous. The

naïver Shelleyan outlook was resorted to, and has been a strong influence in poetry from Swinburne to Masfield. Life could again appear, as to Shelley, a single, urgent stream, though flowing now in an earthier bed. Many poets could go zestfully with the current. For Thomson, it became a dark and motionless pool.

Thomson passed from the Scotch Calvinism of his childhood into a fervent devotion to the work and memory of Shelley; whom he resembled in chivalrous kindness, and in emotional persistence. But whereas Shelley persisted in ethereal hope for mankind, with moments of despair that centered in his own life, in Thomson's case despair became all. He had times of genial gaiety, among his friends and in his writings (e.g., his two "Idylls of Cockaigne"); but a deathly gloom grew upon him; he began to drink heavily, and died in misery at the age of forty-seven. No doubt the sorrows of his early years, and the later poverty and homelessness due, considerably, to his forthrightness of literary purpose, fostered a melancholy inherent in his nature (see H. S. Salt's *Life* of him). But in the central and chief work of his career, "The City of Dreadful Night," his outlook is impersonal and of the mind, in consonance with the sustained and massive clarity of his style. Dark images of London, gathered as he paced the streets night after night and hour after hour during insomnia, are built into this City. But the thing as a whole is the City of modern society as seen by one who believed with Shelley that life is a vast single process, but who became convinced that the process had no goal. The current idea of natural development that lent zest to Swinburne (as in "Hertha," page 624) heightened, for Thomson, the mechanistic aspect of life. He rejected the religion of progress, and he saw no other. He wrote this poem partly, as he says at the beginning,

"Because a cold rage seizes one at whiles
To show the bitter, old, and wrinkled
truth
Stripped naked of all vesture that be-
guiles,
False dreams, false hopes, false masks
and modes of youth."

But he adds that he writes only for those who are in the same state of mind as himself:

"Surely I write not for the hopeful young,
Or those who deem their happiness of worth,
Or such as pasture and grow fat among
The shows of life and feel nor doubt
nor dearth,
Or pious spirits with a God above them
To sanctify and glorify and love them,
Or sages who foresee a heaven on earth."

In connection with the above, and with the selection given in the text, reread Shelley's "Lift not the painted veil" (page 180). Which of Shelley's other short poems comes closest in spirit to "The Sphinx?" What is the suggestion of the moonlight, the cathedral, the three successive postures of the figure opposite the sphinx, and the mien of the sphinx itself? (634.) 4. *shore*: is in apposition with "space," and carries on the figure that is begun by "O'erflowed" (line 3) and completed by line 6.

34. *raised hands*: Cf. lines 13-14, 27. Does the posture of the hands change? (635.) 41. *quiescent*: quiet and reposing, with a suggestion of desistance from action.

HENLEY: OUT OF THE NIGHT

No more than to Thomson was the current religion of progress a source of gladness to William Ernest Henley (1849-1903). But instead of Thomson's massive, gloomy vision and descriptive power, he had a sort of stoical zest in his view of life, and a keen though narrow lyric vigor in uttering his own experiences. His personality was independent to the point of militancy. He attracted good friends, and freely quarrelled with them. He wrote unsparing criticisms in the periodicals through which he earned a precarious livelihood; and publishers regarded him as commercially dangerous. At the beginning of his career every London editor of standing, he said, rejected his poems "In Hospital" (1873-1875). This se-

quence, which anticipated the present school of "dark realism" (see the note on W. W. Gibson, below), was the result of a long confinement in an Edinburgh hospital. Here he was cheered by a visit from his friend to be, R. L. Stevenson, whom he characterized pungently in the sonnet "Apparition."

To the same early troubled period belong the popular lines "Out of the night" (page 635). In them his stoicism is more lurid and stressful than usual. Contrast the tone of the following extract from "Blithe dreams" (1878):

"Here we but peak and dwindle:
The clank of chain and crane,
The whir of crank and spindle,
Bewilder heart and brain;
The ends of our endeavor
Are wealth and fame,
Yet in the still Forever
We're one and all the same;
Delaying, still delaying,
We watch the fading west:
Come! let us go a-maying,
Nor fear to take the best. . . .
Where nests are swaying, swaying,
And spring's fresh voices call,
Come! let us go a-maying,
And bless the God of all!"

Fresh and simple sentiment for nature mingles in Henley's verse with an appreciation of drab city sights (see "London Voluntaries," 1892); and through all goes a sense that individuals and their interests are

"Poor windlestraws
On the great, sullen, roaring pool of Time
And Chance and Change" (from "Epilogue").

DIXON: HUMANITY

A posthumous selection by Robert Bridges from the poetry of Richard Watson Dixon (1833-1900) has called attention to its neglected excellences. It is closely related to the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, but has an austerer spirit. Dixon became a clergyman, and historian,

of the Anglican Church. The present sonnet reveals, suggestively, the man of religion strongly affected by the conscious emphasis upon "Humanity" that developed in the later nineteenth century. Compare the thought of "Hertha" (see especially lines 121-135, page 626), and of "Men and Man" (page 616).

The next two poems, in respect of their substance, may be read as supplements to this one.

(635.) 11-12. *Man can elect* etc.: Man can choose to live in harmony with the universal "soul" (lines 5-8), above the mortal life of individuals.

14. *his glass*: Time's hourglass. — Time, in measuring his own last moments, shall measure Death's also.

LECKY: SAY NOT THAT THE PAST IS DEAD

This piece is characteristic of the notable historian, William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838-1903). His *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism* (1865) displays the mind of Europe moving gradually away from belief in the miraculous. Yet here and in his subsequent works, — on European Morals, England in the Eighteenth Century, Ireland, Democracy and Liberty, etc. — he was studiously fair to lost causes; and very regardful of the persistency, unrecognized by our consciousness, that details of the past may exert upon us.

DOBSON: WITH PIPE AND FLUTE

Following in the tradition of Prior, Praed (see page 283), and Locker-Lampson, Austin Dobson (1840-1921) was the most accomplished among recent writers of *vers de société*, — that is, sprightly verse marked by wit, badinage, and graceful sentiment. Many of his poems reflect the polished society of eighteenth-century England and France — those

"old Augustan Days

Of formal Courtesies and formal Phrase"

in which he found rare delight, and to our knowledge of which he contributed by various entertaining essays and biographies. His work marks a reaction, among certain men of letters, against the undue depreciation of the eighteenth century fostered by Wordsworth, Keats, Carlyle, and others. It will most please those who share Dobson's passion for the more sparkling aspects of the life of that period. His poems, always felicitous in expression, have a neo-classical perfection of finish; yet under the bland Augustan manner there is a wistful regret which belongs to the later nineteenth century and which links Dobson with such immediate predecessors as Fitzgerald and Cory. Through all the artifice runs a vein of genuine poetry.

Austin Dobson helped to revive the Old French verse-forms (ballade, rondeau, villanelle, and triolet), which were fashionable in the seventies and eighties and have been considerably practised since. The present poem is a rondeau. Observe the characteristics of the form: the structure of the three strophes, the rhyme-scheme, and the use of the first half-line as a refrain. Compare another rondeau of Dobson's, "In After Days" (Stedman, *A Victorian Anthology*, page 491) with the well known rondeau of John McCrae's, "In Flanders Fields." — Very similar to this form is the rondel. See Swinburne's "Roundel" (page 632) and the note, page 797, above.

(636.) 13. *the night-jar's note*: See Meredith's "Love in the Valley," lines 35-36 (page 601).

R. L. STEVENSON (1850-1894)

For the relation of Robert Louis Stevenson to his own time, see the first paragraph of the sketch of Kipling, below. The two writers have in common a zest for action and physical adventure. But Stevenson, though less originative, had a more finely organized and balanced nature, together with a greater range and subtlety of mind and sympathies; and he had also a masculine sweetness of temper not found in the younger author. His poems, except for the inimitable *Child's*

Garden of Verses, are not among his most distinctive works, and he himself held a modest estimate of their value. But *Underwoods* presents very attractively the romanticism and the joyous vagabondage of youth, and a few of the poems, including those here reprinted, contain something more. Stevenson's deepest intuition was that life, however transitory, is an ineffably precious thing, and that it is a man's part to live it valorously and cheerfully. The "Requiem" expresses in its eight lines the thought that is worked out circumstantially in the essays "Æs Triplex" and "Pulvis et Umbra," which should be read by those interested in Stevenson's reaction to the outlook of his age. The poem is extraordinary for breadth in simplicity: breadth of movement and suggestion, with piercing simplicity of feeling and word. But the other two pieces quoted in the text are more characteristic. The "Morning Drum-Call" gives the eager laboriousness that accompanied, in Stevenson, the view of life rendered with genial irony in "The Celestial Surgeon."

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

Slight need had Stevenson himself of such providential, therapeutic injections of "pleasure," "pain," and "sin"! He has in mind—as Meredith, Whitman, and Swinburne so often had—the dull-heartedness of the average conventional citizen. Kipling and especially Davidson (selections from whom follow) were very conscious of it. And during the past thirty years, anti-conventionalism has become in literature a lively cult. Very many of the vast number of poems being printed in England and America at the present time are animated by the pursuit, in one direction or another, of free vitality, in contrast with conventional living. See the introductory note on Meredith's "Ode to the Spirit of Earth," page 789, above.

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-)

With the advent of Rudyard Kipling, about 1890, there came into English poetry a powerful reassertion of the claims of

active, practical, energetic life. The last important new poet to gain a wide popular hearing had been Swinburne, in the sixties, in whom was an element of effeminacy and voluptuousness. Since that time, while Tennyson, Meredith, and others had continued to produce poetry of vigor and high intellectual quality, it had appealed to a limited class of readers. More notice was attracted, in the last two decades of the century, by an "æsthetic" group, among whom Oscar Wilde was the leading spirit, and in whose hands the Ruskin-Rossetti-Morris tradition degenerated into a mere search for pleasurable sensation. To the far-reaching changes which were taking place in the life of the British people, the literary coteries of the capital paid scant attention, cultivating instead an elegant boredom and amusing themselves with such epigrams as Wilde's "I can resist anything except temptation." This shallow æstheticism of the "yellow nineties"—an extreme reaction from the seriousness of the greater Victorians—had no real roots in British character, and would have passed, even without the extinguishment it received from the tragic disgrace of its chief figure and the outbreak of the Boer War. But one main significance for their own time of both Stevenson and Kipling was the fact that, into such an enervated atmosphere, they brought youthful vigor, hope, and manliness. They anticipated by a few years Theodore Roosevelt's praise of "the strenuous life."

Kipling's early surroundings were those of the British official class in India. His parents (both children of Wesleyan ministers) were cultivated and delightful people, the father being a professor of architectural sculpture at the British School of Art in Bombay and later principal of a school of art at Lahore. Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, learned Hindustani from a native nurse, attended school at the United Services College in England (where he was still, however, in an Anglo-Indian environment), and at eighteen returned to India. From a position on the staff of a newspaper, the young man went to the frontier and lived for a while with the army, fitting himself to "write up Tommy Atkins." His *Departmental*

Ditties, published in India in 1886, are the outcome of this experience, and many of his early stories are "stories" in the strict journalistic sense. Travelling through Japan and America, Kipling went to London, where his literary reputation was soon established. The *Barrack Room Ballads* (1892) became almost immediately known throughout the English-speaking world. He enlarged his acquaintance with the Empire by travels in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. For five years, following his marriage to an American lady, he made his home in Brattleboro, Vermont. For the last twenty-five years or so he has lived in Sussex. In the Great War his only son was killed; he has one daughter. The larger part (though by no means all) of his most significant writing was done before 1901,—between the ages of 21 and 36. His great contemporary reputation rests even more upon his fiction (the novel *Kim* and many short stories) than upon his poetry.

First and most obviously, Mr. Kipling is the spokesman for British imperialism, a movement of great political significance which has been curiously slighted in the poetry of the last fifty years. Of such economic factors as the competition for foreign markets Kipling takes, naturally, small account. To him imperialism is simply the destined result of the strain of adventurousness in British blood. To "the dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-stifled town," comes the Whisper, the Vision, the Power with the Need:

"You have heard the beat of the off-shore
wind,
And the thresh of the deep-sea rain;
You have heard the song—how long?
how long?
• Pull out on the trail again!"

To exploration succeeds conquest and settlement; the dead path-finders cry:

"Follow after—we are waiting, by the
trails that we lost,
For the sound of many footsteps, for the
tread of a host."

Such has been, to Kipling, the stirring and simple story of British ascendancy in

remote lands,—a progress which has been, in his mind, actively superintended by the Most High: "He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the Earth!" But principally it is the later, administrative side of the vast undertaking that interests him, the responsibility of governing righteously these "new-caught, sullen peoples, half devil and half child":

"Take up the White Man's burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of those ye humor
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
'Why brought ye us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?'"

By this assumption of Caucasian superiority to "lesser breeds without the Law," he has given no little offence to members of alien races,—though he acknowledges handsomely, as in "Fuzzy-Wuzzy," any exhibitions they may offer of good Anglo-Saxon grit. Notwithstanding his sympathy with certain types of Indian character, Kipling has as little of "the international mind" as any living man of letters. He cherishes no Utopian visions of a "federation of the world"; but his allegiance to the existing union which binds Great Britain and the overseas Dominions is deep and fervid:

"For my house and thy house no help
shall we find
Save thy house and my house—kin
cleaving to kind."

Of the Army and Navy, as the guardians of Britain's imperial position, and of all the Services which knit together the far-flung Empire, Kipling has written copiously and with an assurance born not of personal experience in the ranks but of an amazing journalistic capacity for receiving impressions and digesting information. Doubtless, however, his devotion to the military life (the hardness of which he has never minimized) rests on a deeper instinct,—his bent toward action rather than toward contemplation.

All forms of effective cooperation, of which an army is merely the most conspicuous example, appeal powerfully to him. One sees this trait in his eager interest in machinery, so abhorrent to the disciples of Ruskin; for a 7,000-horse-power engine illustrates, as well as an army, the necessary subordination of parts to a whole (see "M'Andrew's Hymn"). Even in his boldly imaginative sea-poems, what moves him most is not the power and glory of the sea, but man's determination to master and to use it (see "The Last Chantey," page 637).

The qualities of his style have been in keeping with this predominantly mundane and practical content. The early volume which made Kipling's fame was a collection of "ballads," or narrative poems of army life, written in the vernacular of the soldier (a hardened corporal, one would fancy; of twenty-five years' service), and marked by rather catchy refrains, and especially by a swinging, if somewhat obvious, rhythm suggestive of the music-hall. These two characteristics—the use of the vernacular and the marked rhythm—have remained fairly constant qualities in Kipling's verse, even in his more serious didactic poems. He has introduced into English a host of East-Indian or local words, and has employed in poetry the technical terms of machinery and the lingo of the army and the trades. More than that, his language has the smack of ordinary speech. One of his poems of the Boer War, for instance, begins

"I wish my mother could see me now,
with a fence-post under my arm,"

and he sums up the moral of that conflict in the bristling couplet:

"Let us admit it fairly, as a business people should,

We have had no end of a lesson: it will
do us no end of good."

That kind of pungency is not, of course, the particular mark of poetry; but in Kipling's verse it is only one element among many. The raciness and contemporaneity of the language is no more striking than the constant Biblical flavor. Hardly a

page is without some impress of the imaginative vigor of Old Testament narratives and Psalms. The powerful and varied rhythms, also, which have succeeded the sing-song of early ditties, have not a little in common with those of the King James translators.

But all in all Mr. Kipling has been less of a poet than a forceful personality using verse as one medium of communication. More than any other writer since Tennyson, he has been a great public figure. That his poetic art is by no means all spontaneous and unstudied, a glance at his youthful imitations of familiar models will show. Yet it is not for purely æsthetic pleasure, or for that elevation of spirit which poetry may induce and sustain, that one turns to Kipling. It is, rather, for the kind of invigoration that comes from contact with normal, active humanity. In certain important directions, to be sure, Kipling's tendencies have been counter to the popular drift. In an age of democracy, he has proclaimed an essentially barbarian belief in the rule of the strongest ("The Recessional," page 638, shows him in sobered reaction from such a type of thought, and embodies in memorable phrases a deep moral intuition of his nation); in an age of liberalism and widening toleration, he has talked in the terms of a tribal God and a chosen race; he has even dared to assail, in the interests of universal military training, that serious pursuit of his countrymen, the game of cricket. But in the underlying tenets of his philosophy he has been close to the popular mind,—in his aversion for the "brittle" intellectual and the futile idealist; in his passion for the life of action; in his insistence upon the day's work for the day's wage. For all his intense and flaming partisanship, for all a certain streak of brutality, he has put into succinct and portable form the avowed morality of the average man—how far that morality is from the *performance* of the average man, readers may test for themselves by repeating, in introspective mood, the familiar poem entitled "If—." In terms that neither the plainest nor the most gifted can misunderstand, he has asserted the paramount authority of duty.

The ultimate rank of Kipling among the

poets of his time cannot be predicted with confidence. A very large amount of his political verse is of ephemeral interest; its day has passed with the situations that gave rise to it. His mannerisms and tricks of style may weigh against his enduring quality; and, more than these, the fact that he is so largely untouched by finer intellectual and spiritual issues—that his code is, to use Arnold's terminology, so largely Hebraic, so little Hellenistic. If he is not among the greater poets, he is assuredly among the greater men of letters of his century. One index of his greatness is the number of Kipling phrases which have become as much a part of English speech as anything in Gray or Pope. That in itself is a token of very impressive literary power.

THE LAST CHANTEY

For the motto, see *Revelation*, XXI, 1, as in the Authorized Version.

(637.) 1. *Vault*: i.e., of Heaven.—The Cherubim (Cherubs) were next in rank below the Seraphim who surrounded God's throne.

9. *In the deep* etc.: In the Resurrection the Lord had raised them from the bottom of the sea. See *Revelation*, XX, 13.

10. *barracout'*: barracouta, corrupt form of "barracuda," a large fish belonging to the neighborhood of the West Indies.

14. *floe*: mass of floating ice.—In medieval legend, the voyaging Saint Brandan finds Judas thus enjoying his respite from fire.

27. *picaroon*: pirate-ship.

32. *frapped a ship*: strengthened the frame of their ship by lashing ropes tightly about it. See *Acts*, XXVII, 14 ff.

33. *these*: mariners.—Saint Paul points at the present chorus, by way of reproach for their previous complaint against the sea (lines 6-10).

(638.) 46. *Gothavn*: a whaling-port in Greenland.—*'speckshioner*: specktioneer, chief harpooner.

47. *flinching*: snapping, i.e., the bevelling of timbers in shipbuilding.

52. *lead*: (pronounced "leed") channel.

62. *spindrift*: spoondrift, salt-water spray driven by a gale.—*fulmar*: a northern sea-bird of the petrel family.

RECESSIONAL

A "recessional" is a hymn sung while choir and clergy are passing out of church at the close of a service. The poem was published, just after the commemoration of Queen Victoria's sixtieth anniversary, in the London "Times," which remarked, editorially: "At this moment of imperial exaltation, Mr. Kipling does well to remind his countrymen that we have something more to do than to build battle-ships and multiply guns."

22. *the Law*: the Hebrew Law. The poet is thinking of his compatriots as "the chosen people" (cf. line 30), and would remind them of two virtues they have long claimed (lines 21-22).

26. *shard*: a hard fragment; here used figuratively for projectiles.

27. *dust*: in apposition with "heart" (line 25).

THE SONS OF MARTHA

See *Luke*, x, 38-42.

DAVIDSON: TO THE NEW MEN

The poetry of John Davidson (1857-1909) is, among other things, an expression of a curious philosophy, at once materialistic and aristocratic, according to which "men are the universe become conscious":

"... every atom in the earth
Aches to be man unconsciously, and every
living birth,—

The lowest struggling motion and the
fiercest blood on fire,

The tree, the flower,—are pressing to-
wards a future ever higher,

To reach that mood august wherein we
know we suffer pain."

His evolutionary type of thought is seen in "To the New Men" (page 639). Though he disclaimed indebtedness to any one else's philosophy, the influence of

Nietzsche is evident in his various prose "Testaments" and his essay "On Poetry," which defends the thesis that "poetry is Matter become vocal," and combines penetrating literary analysis with startling pseudo-scientific hypothesis.

Beginning life as assistant in a chemistry laboratory, Davidson was successively pupil-teacher at an academy, student for one year at Edinburgh University, teacher of science, clerk, journalist, and *littérateur*. He suffered from poverty and ill-health, and finally, in a despondent mood, killed himself. By his own direction, no biography of him has been written. His poetry glorifies suffering as a purifying part of the cosmic process, and gives no quarter to either religion or humanitarianism. Though at times strained, there is distinct power in his symbolic delineations of spiritual triumph or infamy. With much that is stern and terrible, *Ballads and Songs* (his best known volume) has beautiful descriptions of natural scenes, and is interesting for its technique and its ideas. His narrative verse may be compared with that of other "realists": see the introductory note under W. W. Gibson, below. The present lyric, and its companion piece "To the New Women," are the introductory poems of *Ballads and Songs*.

(640.) 19-20. *Let the whole past go* etc.: Cf. the second and fourth stanzas.

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-)

The secure position of Alfred Edward Housman among modern lyricists rested for twenty-five years upon one slender volume, *A Shropshire Lad* (1896). The greater number of the short poems contained in it were written in the early months of the year preceding publication, — a period during which the author was visited (as he records) by a continuous poetic excitement. In 1922 he published a second, even shorter, collection, *Last Poems*, about a quarter of which were composed in the April of that year, the others mainly between 1895 and 1910.

After taking his degree at Oxford, Mr. Housman was for ten years a "higher division clerk" in H. M. Patent Office in London. Since 1892, he has been a pro-

fessor of Latin, first in University College, London, later in Cambridge University; and he is a distinguished classical scholar. From the frequent mention in his poems of redcoats, soldiering, and the like, one might fancy that he had at some time a strong personal interest in military service, either through his own enlistment or through friendship with men in the ranks. However that may be, Housman's is essentially not a martial spirit, so exclusively is it concerned with personal relationships and private sentiments. The constant themes of his delicately wrought lyrics are the young man's response to the exquisite beauty of an April in Shropshire, the devotion of friends, the pains of lovers, the transiency of youth, and the nostalgia of the sojourner in London for his home country (as in section LII, page 640). The spirited note of "Reveille" (page 640) is hardly characteristic of the collection as a whole; and even here the last two lines carry a sombre suggestion. This hint of mortality is seldom far from Housman's mood; and quite a few of the poems deal with violent forms of death — murder, hanging, suicide — or the sickness of the soul that leads to suicide: a motif not infrequent in the literature of "the decadence," though these verses of Housman's had perhaps some more immediate inspiration. In other poems, man's hard doom is accepted without bitterness but without reconciliation:

"And since, my soul, we cannot fly
To Saturn nor to Mercury,
Keep we must, if keep we can,
These foreign laws of God and man."

Within the narrow limits indicated, Housman has shown himself one of the most accomplished craftsmen of his generation. The loveliness of his songs (some of which have been set to music by the American composer C. F. Manney) is partly a matter of skilfully manipulated vowel- and consonant-sounds, partly of poignant imagery condensed without loss of clearness or beauty. In such matters the poet's literary tact is sure. In his best work, as in the lyric "With rue my heart is laden" (page 640), he escapes

from merely self-regarding emotion and touches a simple theme in a manner that gives it universality.

IV. REVEILLE

(640.) 8. *Straws*: strews.

14. *forelands*: headlands, capes.

YEATS: INTO THE TWILIGHT

William Butler Yeats (1865-), the most representative writer of the Irish Literary Movement that rose in the 1890's, was born in Dublin, the son of a distinguished artist. His residence has been divided between England and Ireland, with sojourns in Paris, and his life has been almost entirely devoted to literature. In his younger years he read widely in English romantic poets from Spenser to Rossetti, edited Blake, and dabbled in theosophy. This preoccupation with romance and mysticism shaped the spirit of his poetry more than the old Irish mythology and folk-lore, into the study of which he next threw himself in pursuance of one of the purposes of the Celtic revival: namely, that appropriate episodes from old Irish tales should be treated in verse retaining the color and spirit of the original. "Contact with a mass of material so long unused for literary purposes that it had been almost forgotten gave his work freshness of appeal; his devotion not merely to Ireland as a nation, but to the Irish spirit as he interpreted it, gave him sincerity and authority of utterance; and his philosophy, though it was one of escape from life rather than a resolute attempt to face its problems and agitations, was not unwelcome to a generation world-weary and somewhat oppressed with a sense of its own meaningless materialism" (J. W. Cunliffe, in *English Literature During the Last Half Century*). When he published *The Wind Among the Reeds*, 1899, he had fallen under still another literary influence, that of the French Symbolist School, and had begun to allegorize the personages of Irish legend. Yeats has championed a fundamentally romantic aesthetic theory: that poetry is not a criticism of life, but a

revelation of a hidden life; and that the arts should dissociate themselves from "their age" and busy themselves "with old faiths, myths, dreams, the accumulated beauty of the age." Perhaps the most fascinating of his longer poems is "The Wanderings of Usheen" (i.e., Ossian),—to which the lyric here given would serve as a good introduction. Compare the mood of "Into the Twilight" with the mood of Morris's "Apology" (page 587). (641.) 5. *Eire*: Erin, Ireland.

GEORGE W. RUSSELL ("A. E.")

(1862-)

"A.E." was prominently associated with Yeats, George Moore, and others in the Irish Movement. He is an accomplished poet, the author of a book of essays (*Imaginations and Reveries*, 1916), a student of the mystical books of the East, and withal a man of practical wisdom and capacity. The large wholesomeness of his character, beneath his mystical bent, has had a more distinguished influence than have his literary gifts.

THE GREAT BREATH

An old philosophic and poetic idea wins here a finely original form, in relation to an after-sunset scene. Compare Wordsworth's ode on "An Evening of Extraordinary Splendor" (page 50). Which lines in that ode have something of the same idea?

9. *trembling*: i.e., in the breath of Beauty; cf. the preceding stanza.

11-12. *when Beauty* — — — *in death*: when, through the ceasing of outward beauty, the inward Beauty becomes known.—Beauty "herself" is distinguished from her creative "breath" or effect in the world. The poet thinks of the increase of the world's beauty through prehistoric ages; but suggests that it can never embody the *essential* Beauty.

INHERITANCE

17-18. *The careless sweetness* etc.: Cf. lines 9-10 of the preceding poem.

SHARP: THE WHITE PEACE

The work of William Sharp (1855-1905) is related, like that of Yeats and Russell, to the so-called Celtic revival. He too was influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, and sought poetic relief from the age of industrialism. Born in the busy mill-town of Paisley near Glasgow, he gave his heart to the Scottish Highlands, and took the pen-name of "Fiona Macleod." From his extraordinary absorption in Highland folk-lore and mysticism came his most distinctive writings,—the *Dominion of Dreams* (1895), *The Sin-Eater* (1899), and other alluring sketches in prose. He was not "lost poorly" in dreams: he worked very hard, wrote voluminously as critic and biographer, and maintained a fine sweetness of nature. He knew "pain," and he knew also "the white peace" (as distinguished from nature-dreams) that can move above pain, through "the Soul of Man." Observe that this poem, though it bears a superficial resemblance to "Into the Twilight" (page 640), moves essentially in the opposite direction—with a suggestive difference in *rhythmic* movement. Compare Arnold's "Palladium" (page 544).

FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859-1907).

In an age whose main tendencies were still running strongly in the direction of natural science and a materialistic philosophy, appeared the greatest English Catholic poet and one of the most mystical writers of the century. As far as he is the inheritor of nineteenth-century traditions, Thompson owes most to Shelley, Coleridge, DeQuincey, D. G. Rossetti, and Coventry Patmore. But, as is indicated by the copies of Blake and Aeschylus carried in his ragged pockets, his poetry has wider than nineteenth-century affiliations. The Elizabethans, Crashaw, Sir Thomas Browne, the Saints and theologians, all converged their influences upon his remarkable genius.

Thompson's father, a substantial Roman Catholic physician in Lancashire, educated Francis for the priesthood, but, finding the shy, unpractical boy unfitted for that vocation, sent him to Owens College, Man-

chester, to study medicine. Here for six years Francis evaded his studies, read widely but unsystematically, lost himself in reveries, and unfortunately, to palliate the miseries of incipient tuberculosis, began the use of laudanum. Curiously, it was through his mother's last gift to him, a copy of *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, that he received the suggestion. The habit thus contracted almost destroyed him. Having thrice failed in his examinations in medicine, and been rejected for the army, he drifted (first in Manchester, later in London) from one menial employment to another,—bookseller's collector, shop-assistant, vendor of matches. Neglecting even to collect the small weekly remittance from his father, he went down to "a poverty so absolute that he was often without pen and paper" (E. Meynell, *Life of Francis Thompson*),—an unkempt tramp, moved on by the police, sleeping sometimes on the Thames Embankment under "the abashless inquisition of each star," and learning how many mugs of tea there are in a penny. Yet enslavement to opium was his only vice. A girl befriended him, sharing her scanty earnings as Ann of the *Confessions* had done with DeQuincey, and breaking the wholly innocent connection only when more substantial aid was at hand (see the poem "A Child's Kiss"). Some time before, Thompson had sent a bedraggled manuscript to a magazine; and through this circumstance, after he had been two years on the streets, he made the acquaintance of Wilfred Meynell, the editor, and his wife Alice, a poetess of distinction—both Catholics like himself. These gentle people received the half-starved vagrant into their home, protected him until he was restored to health, and opened the way to a literary career. The opium habit, while not completely broken, was henceforth held in control, and sustained creative work became possible. His way of living was still eccentric and disorganized. Getting out of bed, whether in the morning or (more frequently) in the late afternoon, was always "an unnatural act." Ineffectual as he was in everything except literature, he had a childlike loveliness. He lived in lodgings in London, with an occasional retreat to a monastery in Wales,

and enjoyed affectionate intimacy with the family of his discoverer, some of his best poems being inspired by Mrs. Meynell and her children. His three volumes brought enthusiastic recognition from such diverse judges as Burne-Jones, William Archer, and Arnold Bennett; and critical essays from his pen were eagerly sought by the reviews. His essay on Shelley, published posthumously, is a masterpiece of impressionistic criticism. He died peacefully, in a Catholic hospital, from tuberculosis.

Thompson's intellectual range was greater than either Patmore's or Christina Rossetti's. His Ode on "The Nineteenth Century," for instance, in its subtle analysis of the scientific spirit, shows him aware of both the glories and the dangers of that preoccupation of his time. Of "The Mistress of Vision" he himself said that it contained as much science as mysticism, and the long and splendid "Anthem of Earth" is philosophical rather than religious. His most characteristic work, however, was, like Patmore's, a celebration of love, either in its earthly or its theological sense. In poems on human love, Patmore had written as one initiated into its mysteries. Thompson too has treated the passion, as in "Love Declared," with full understanding and great nobility; but commonly he shows such things only through reflex mood induced by dream or imagination—he speaks, that is, in the tone of one who has long renounced immediate satisfactions for a wholly ideal experience. The courtly delicacy and restraint of the poems to Mrs. Meynell (see "Before Her Portrait in Youth," page 642), are suggestive of Patmore; but the note of renunciation, the sense of spiritual loneliness, belongs peculiarly to Thompson. The same poignant quality is felt in some of his poems on childhood (e.g., "The Poppy"); in others, and perhaps his best, there is a delightful, almost mediæval freedom from self-consciousness (e.g., "The Making of Viola" and "Ex Ore Infantium").

The abstruse nature of his subject-matter, and the very fineness of psychological observation which is his distinction, demand utmost concentration in reading. The difficulty is increased by involved syntax and a preference for archaic,

poetic, or unusual words, like *shawm*, *amerce*, *temerarious*, *devisal*, which, when they do not baffle, may unpleasantly check the reader. Many such terms can be defended on the ground of the poetic tradition in which he was working, but their frequency makes impossible any wide popularity for the bulk of Thompson's writing. Like Shelley, he is a poet's poet, in the sense that his genius will be most appreciated and his difficulties least felt by the poetically-minded. To such readers the glorious imagery and the intricate harmonies of his strophes will always afford keen delight.

It is difficult to assess justly the complex personality which this poet's life and writings reveal. To a not unsympathetic uncle, Francis seemed to lead a "dawdling, sauntering sort of life," and there is both humor and pathos in his practical father's comment on learning of the son's achievement in poetry,—"If the lad had but told me!" Unquestionably, there was in Thompson, as in Coleridge and DeQuincey, a certain febrile element which does not belong to the highest type of creative genius. "To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster" is a clear and painful recognition of this disintegration of his own life. On the other hand, it is unsafe to interpret too narrowly such records of the divided self as "The Hound of Heaven," which are founded on both Catholic tradition and universal experience. He did not think of himself, in the evangelical way, as a brand plucked from the burning; and his later poetry imparts, more often than his fears, the great peace of the faith (see "The Kingdom of God," page 645). "To be the poet of the return to nature," said Thompson, "is somewhat; but I would be the poet of the return to God" (E. Meynell, *Life*, page 205).

BEFORE HER PORTRAIT IN YOUTH

The portrait is that of Mrs. Alice Meynell, Thompson's friend and benefactress, herself a poet (line 28 ff.). See the second paragraph of the biography, above.
(642.) 18. *For that:* for the reason that.

(642.) 26. *from* — — — *flower*: From the picture he conceives the girl herself.

28. *front*: forehead.

35. *So*: as in the picture; cf. lines 27-28, 31.

36. *As viewless ether* etc.: i.e., in the sky.

39-42. *Through maiden meads* etc.: Proserpine was gathering flowers in a meadow when Pluto carried her off in his chariot to make her his wife. — For other features of her story, see the notes on Swinburne's Proserpine poems, page 795, above.

44. *cockshut-light*: evening twilight; the time when the "cockshut," a large net, was used to catch woodcocks by shutting them in. — This verse carries on the pastoral imagery (line 39 ff.), and alludes to Thompson's wandering period (see the biography, above).

45. *'lated*: belated (i.e., too late for love; see lines 41, 48).

52. *water-wraith*: water-spirit. — For "wraith," see the note to Rossetti's "King's Tragedy," line 173, page 784, above.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

Compare *Psalms*, cxxxix, 1-18. — Initially the poet seeks quick refuge from the divine pursuit (lines 1-51), then the comfort of rich fellowships with Nature (lines 52-110); but without avail. Defenseless, he finds his past and present life a failure, and nothing ahead but death (lines 111-154). Finally come submission and revelation (lines 155-182).

(643.) 29. *ports*: portals.

44. *Plashy*: streaked, splashed (with color); as in Keats's "Hyperion," Book Second, line 45 (page 261).

52-53. *I sought* — — — *or maid*: Cf. lines 16-23. — This fifth paragraph, like the third, begins with humankind and then passes to nature (line 61).

66. *Lady-Mother*: Nature.

69. *dais*: canopy.

(644.) 99. *Nature* — — — *drouth*: Cf. "The White Peace" (page 641).

100. *owe*: own.

118-119. *I shook* etc.: alluding to Samson's end; see *Judges*, xvi, 29-30.

120. *mounded*: The posthumous edition of *The Works of F. T.* reads "moulded."

123. *sun-starts*: gleams of sunshine.

131. *amaranthine*: immortal like the mythical flower "amaranth" (Greek: "unwithering").

(645.) 156. *bruit*: loud sound.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Found among Thompson's papers after his death. — For the allusion of the motto, see *Psalms*, cxxxvii, 4 (Authorized Version); *Ephesians*, ii, 19; etc.

17-20. *when so sad* etc.: Cf. the preceding poem, lines 136-140, 177-179.

19. *Shall shine* etc.: See *Genesis*, xxviii, 10-17.

20. *Charing Cross*: a central square in London; often resorted to as a resting-place by unfortunates, including Thompson himself in his days of poverty and wandering.

21-24. *Yea, in the night* etc.: For the allusions in this closing stanza, see *Matthew*, xiv, 24-36 (Authorized Version).

THOMAS HARDY (1840-)

Full of honors and with his fine faculties undimmed, Mr. Hardy is approaching the end of a life that, externally considered, affords no explanation of his pessimism. This, it seems, is deeply rooted in his temperament. Looking back, in one of his latest poems, he avows with his engaging candor: "For Life I had never cared greatly . . .

In earliest years — why I know not —

I viewed it askance;

Conditions of doubt,

Conditions that leaked slowly out,
May haply have bent me to stand and to
show not

Much zest for its dance."

Instead of zestful blood, however, he had the zest of a fine artist. Born in Dorset-

shire, he was gifted with an affectionate and absorbing eye for the life of the surrounding district—the “Wessex” of his writings—and with a faculty for architectural outline not surpassed by the greatest English novelists. Lacking their human wealth, Hardy could the more rapidly develop a critical clearness of aim and of design. It is significant that his first profession was architecture; and that he passed quickly from early verse to early tales, which lacked depth but not finish of outline (e.g., *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, 1873), and quickly brought him such a popularity as his optimistic friend Meredith never enjoyed. Most significantly, his pessimistic outlook, though it was present in unpublished lyrics of the 1860's, was introduced only gradually into his published works. It became rampant in certain passages of his later novels, and elaborately systematized in his climactic poem,—a vast Napoleonic drama, “The Dynasts” (1904-1908). But on the whole, Hardy's gloom has not interfered with professional success, and has been kept subordinate to artistic purposes. If it was responsible for turning the heroine of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) into what Meredith termed “a smudge in vapor,” it lent power to the noted Egon Heath scene that opens *The Return of the Native*. (1878), and to the sombre forest atmosphere of a novel less noted but more veracious in its plot than the two just mentioned,—*The Woodlanders* (1887). With brooding atmospheres, and affecting types of rustic personality, humorous or pathetic, Hardy is more successful than with complex characters and the inner logic of tragedy. He uses the element of chance excessively to bring about striking results, though his use of it is concealed from the hasty eye by his careful coherence of plot outline.

Chance, or “Crass Casualty” as he termed it in the sonnet “Hap” (1866), is in his view a main factor of life,—a result of the blind “Immanent Will,” or “First or Fundamental Energy,” that moves the universe, without feeling or purpose. This “God” (like Caliban's “Setebos,” line 111 ff., page 465) has created beings better than himself, and is mainly responsible for their sins and sorrows. The fact is that Hardy is naïve in

his thoughts upon central reality and, more explicitly than Shelley in “Prometheus Unbound” (page 182), blames the gods while denying their existence. In his dignified preface to “The Dynasts,” he adduces in support of his own view the present “wide prevalence of the Monistic theory of the Universe.” As a whole his doctrine belongs with the aftermath of Shelleyanism. In this connection, review the notes on James Thomson and Henley, pages 797-798, above; and compare Hardy's art and outlook with theirs.

Temperamental and artistic, rather than philosophic, is Hardy's pessimism. Lacking Browning's and, much more, Meredith's zest in the struggle of life, viewing that struggle increasingly from the standpoint of a highly conscious and successful “architect,” Hardy came to regard the universe as a blundering, meaningless process. He reacted from Wordsworthian serenity: “Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is breezy and pure, gets his authority for speaking of ‘Nature's holy plan’” (from *Tess*). He reacted from the Victorian emphasis upon the development of character through affliction. For, above all, he feels extreme sympathy with the frustrated desires of individual lives. In an essay that values his work very highly a critic has remarked: “The one thing that moves the poet to a kind of cheerfulness is triumphant indulgence in sexual desire” (J. W. Cunliffe, *English Literature during the Last Half Century*). Though in this respect prophetic of the present sex-obsession in literature, Hardy's work is very far from impure; simply, he watches with grim satisfaction a vivid passion and joy that the dull fates and conventions cannot suppress. His sympathy with personal desires and aspirations, because insufficiently balanced by other regards, leans toward humanitarian sentimentality. But generally his spirit is finely tender, notably in the lyric on “Shelley's Skylark” (*Collected Poems*, page 92). The distinction of his poetry is that spirit in remarkable combination with an austere style—half concealed under sardonic tone, gray dramatic episode, and pungently etched image.

NATURE'S QUESTIONING

This is one of the "Wessex Poems," written 1865-1870, but not published till 1898.

(646.) 9. *stirs*: The subject of this verb is the quotation that follows (lines 12-24).

19-20. *live remains Of Godhead* etc.: Cf. "In Memoriam," CXVIII, lines 3-4 (page 357). That section also illustrates the "high Plan" ironically referred to in Hardy's next stanza.

THE DARKLING THRUSH

Compare George Meredith's poem "The Thrush in February" (1885).

6. *bine-stems*: stems of climbing plants.

GEORGE MEREDITH

(647.) 14. *his green hill*: Meredith's home at Box Hill, Surrey.

THE WIND BLEW WORDS

The outlook suggested in "Nature's Questioning" (page 645) is here given more explicitly. It seems the antithesis of Shelley's view of Nature (e.g., in "Adonais," stanzas XLII-XLIII, LIV, pages 225, 227). But both poets conceive Life monistically, and are very sensitive to all sufferings.

15-18. *At the pathetic Me* etc.: Life is here viewed as a single being or Ego ("Me") which animates all creatures, and which therefore slaughters itself in impelling them to injure each other, under the "law" of selfishness.

A THOUGHT IN TWO MOODS

See lines 3-12 of the preceding poem. But gloomy irony is now displaced by ironic charm — in four colors.

ROBERT BRIDGES (1844-)

Poet Laureate since 1913 after Alfred Austin, who succeeded Tennyson, Dr. Bridges has followed in his verse the tradition of Tennyson with reminiscences of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. But he

has a note of his own, as a stylist at once scholarly and musical and well aware of the value of simplicity. He has sung of love and beauty with a quiet, persistent, healthy delight. His "Eros and Psyche" is one of the most finished and charming versifications of the story (see the note on Keats's "Ode to Psyche," page 699, above).

SO SWEET LOVE SEEMED

The same change of love is used, very differently, in Wordsworth's "She was a Phantom of Delight" (page 37).

MELANCHOLIA

Bridges quite probably had in mind the vein of pessimism developed in the later nineteenth century and illustrated in a number of the previous selections. The "Incertainity that once gave scope to dream" etc. (lines 5-6) recalls the Shelleyan imagination of the early century, newly freed from bonds and guides, and soaring with hope.

(648.) 1. *The sickness of desire*: desire that is unguided (line 5) and overweening (line 9). Such desire eventually fosters a despairing imagination (lines 2, 10) relieved only by apathy (lines 4, 14).

11. *Joy is wisdom*: in contrast to unwise joy, as well as despair. — Insight fostered by "deep power of joy" is one of Wordsworth's main themes, as in "Tintern Abbey" (page 6).

WATSON: SONG'S APOSTASY

Like Robert Bridges, but pugnaciously, Sir William Watson (1858-) upholds poetic tradition in an age of "new poetry." He expressed his reverence for the founder of nineteenth century verse, and won recognition for himself, in his fine elegy "Wordsworth's Grave" (1890). His outlook is akin to Arnold's stoicism; and he is at his best in verse that has a mental rather than imaginative aim. Often he attains a fine epigrammatic vigor. Here he is striking at a certain kind of "realism" in poetry. See the note under Gibson, below.

(649.) 6. *Yet*: in spite of the fact that her

aberrations are being "lustily acclaimed" by readers (line 1).

(649.) 10-11. *the things - - - rank excess*: the low and ugly desires that Nature keeps on excessively breeding in man. These are referred to as "downward truth" (line 13) because Watson recognizes their reality and their down-pulling power.

14. *To the mountains* etc.: alluding to Mount Helicon and its fountains of the Muses.

W. W. GIBSON (1878-)

The work of Mr. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson illustrates the "realism" which is prominent in recent verse, but which (if an "ism" be desired) may more accurately be termed "dark actualism": an interest in the actual, drab, and often sordid features of present day life, — sometimes in the country, but principally in the industrial towns and cities. This sphere of poetry is well suited to Mr. Gibson's genius. Lacking the individual distinction and lyric gift of Brooke and Masfield, he has a patient, industrious sympathy with the poor and an aptness for dramatic episode, that carry the reader all the way through his large volume of collected *Poems* (1917). One may follow the poet's development and his interesting changes of method in the chief successive divisions of the book: "Stonefolds" (1906), "Daily Bread," "Fires," "Thoroughfares," "Battle" (written in the opening years of the Great War), "Friends," "Livelihood" (1914-1916). The student should compare this book with examples of the work of other latter day realists: Hardy, Masfield, E. L. Masters, Carl Sandburg, and (affording a more fruitful comparison than the others) Robert Frost. For such a study the viewpoint given in the following paragraph may be suggestive:

"Stonefolds" is a series of grim, sometimes bitter, dramatic dialogues representing the life of the shepherds of rugged Northumberland, the poet's native shire. There, in his earlier years, "he made subterranean expeditions with the miners, he followed his nose into slums, he talked

long hours with the unclassed, and listened sympathetically to the lamentations of sea-made widows. His nature — extraordinarily delicate and sensitive — received deep wounds, the scars of which appeared in his subsequent poetry" (W. L. Phelps, in *The Advance of English Poetry in the Twentieth Century*, 1918). An inward sensitiveness and visionary tendency, though not nearly so pronounced as in the case of Masfield, are continually active beneath Gibson's devotion to the sombre aspects of life. For this reason he is inclined both to overemphasize the laborers' gloom, and to lighten it rather unexpectedly with dream-comforts, attributing his own outlook to his personages. But he does not deeply violate the laws of human character, for he does not attempt to penetrate deeply into them. He uses general character-types as carriers for the episodes and activities, and emotional moments, with which he is chiefly concerned. His art is perhaps fullest and most consistent in "Fires," notably in the delightful tale "The Hare," where the characters are merely boy and girl. Here, lure of the wild and sympathy with womanhood are woven together with a visionary touch, in a realistic rural setting. From this point of view the reader will better appreciate the charming introductory lyric of "Fires" (page 649). A touch of the Shelleyan style may be felt in these lines. And something of the Shelleyan spirit pervades present realistic verse as a whole. The work of Masfield is a notable illustration, the work of Frost a notable exception.

PROEM OF FIRES

17. *lustral*: sacrificial and purifying. The allusion is to the cremation of Shelley's body on the Italian shore, six weeks after his death by drowning.

ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

The "Heath" in the northern suburbs of London is a favorite holiday resort of the city's working-classes. Very characteristic are the "purple feather" of the girl and her mingled tears and jests while her soldier proposes.

PROMETHEUS

Alluding to the sufferings of Prometheus for providing the human race with useful fire; see Byron's "Prometheus" (page 127) and the note, page 678, above. (650.) 8. *his world*: According to one legend, Prometheus was the creator of man. The line suggests the potentiality of the modern proletariat.

HODGSON: EVE

For a tint of "dark actualism" (see the note under Gibson, above) in the work of Mr. Ralph Hodgson (1879-), see "The Bull," the most remarkable of the longer poems in his slender volume (1917). On the whole he is a secluded artist, with sharp sympathy for animals, and a quaint lyric humor in looking out upon the passing show of human life. In "My Books" he surveys his library with witty affection, and concludes with high praise of Shelley, who is "more than all the others mine." — The present tuneful comedy is exquisite in its narrative omissions, as well as in its creations. Similar rhythms appear in certain lines of Beddoes' "Dream-Pedlary" (page 231).

(650.) 48. *Blasphemous Tree*: alluding to the effect of its apples upon those who ate them, as in "Paradise Lost," IX, 834-838. (651.) 63. *lewd*: wicked, rude.

64. *Under the hill*: In folk-lore, demons and other spirits have feasting-halls inside of hills. — The Garden of Eden was on a hill ("Paradise Lost," IV, 131 ff.).

RUPERT BROOKE (1887-1915)

Some significant differences may be found between the poetry of the war which opened the nineteenth century (represented in this book by passages of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Campbell, Wolfe, and Byron) and the poetry of the war which may be said to have closed that era. The poems inspired by the Great War of 1914-1918 have been carefully collected in several anthologies.

Among the very few that have any considerable value as poetry are Brooke's five sonnets of 1914, the first and last of which are here reprinted (page 651). That the struggle had a very special meaning for this young man appears from his vivid letters and the *Memoir* of him (1918) by his friend Edward Marsh. The War came to him as a great public opportunity, but also as a great solution for the growing perplexity of his own life and outlook. In spirit, he was more richly poetic than his friends Masfield and Gibson — than any contemporary poet, it seems; but in expression, he had great difficulty in finding his special path. Personal circumstances seemed all in his favor. A prize-winner at Rugby, where his father was a master, he afterwards enjoyed a full life at King's College, Cambridge, a loved retreat near at hand in Grantchester Vicarage (commemorated in a delightful poem), a period of study and widened experience in Germany, and a host of admiring friends, who encouraged him in his writing. His personality was intense, clear, and singularly charming. His outlook was potentially wide, for he possessed the rare combination of sharp humor (as in "Heaven," page 651) and mystic idealism. "What happens," he wrote to a friend, in regard to his mysticism, "is that I suddenly feel the extraordinary value and importance of everybody I meet. . . . I tell you that a Birmingham gouty Tariff Reform fifth-rate business man is splendid and immortal and desirable." The current sense of social responsibility — "the social vision" — was in him at its purest, and more and more induced self-criticism. "The worst of solitude — or the best — is, that one begins poking at his own soul, examining it, cutting the soft and rotten parts away. And where's one to stop?"

But his constructive imagination was limited — largely, perhaps, as a result of the age in which he grew to maturity. His late letters show him still reacting from "Victorianism," and anxious that his mystic intuitions should not "cheat" him, as he put it, "into any kind of belief." He dabbled in Platonism; but on the whole his thinking was confined by the rather vague flux of contemporary spiritual opinion.

Yet, not gifted for actualistic tales in verse like Masfield and Gibson, but inclined toward a poetry of vision, he had exceptional need of a *structured* outlook on life to give shape and concrete fullness to his mystic imagination. By 1913 he had come to feel that his poetry was centrally purposeless and drifting. His journey in that year to America and the South Seas, though he entered with his customary zest into all the new experiences, was urged by inward restlessness and accompanied by self-scrutiny of sombre trend. His fine and exacting spirit demanded, and could not find, a fruitful way ahead. But the War brought him vocation, and peace. His strong love of poetry and of living turned all to love of his country. His sonnet on "The Soldier" proved prophetic. He died of disease in the Ægean Sea, as naval lieutenant on his way to fateful Gallipoli, and lies buried in the island of Skiros—in that earth rich with poetic tradition, "a richer dust concealed."—With the two sonnets may be read the following fragment of an elegy jotted down by Brooke during the voyage to the East:

"He wears
The ungathered blossom of quiet; stiller
he
Than a deep well at noon, or lovers
met;
Than sleep, or the heart after wrath.
He is
The silence following great words of
peace."

HEAVEN

A kind of satire barely suggested in the preceding poem is full blown here. See the note on Stevenson's "Celestial Surgeon," above.—Compare the central idea and the opening situation of Browning's "Caliban" (page 463). Compare also Hunt's "The Fish, the Man, and the Spirit" (page 233). (651.) 9-14. *One may not doubt* etc.: The allusions are to "In Memoriam," LIV (page 336).

22. *Squamous*: covered with scales.
34. *no more land*: Compare the ironic motto to Kipling's "Last Chantey" (page 637), and see the note on it.

PEACE

7. *their dirty songs and dreary*: Cf. Watson's "Song's Apostasy," lines 10-11 (page 649).

11-14. *Gives somewhere back* etc.: See "The Treasure," which follows the present sonnet in the *Collected Poems*, and also "The Great Lover."

JOHN MASEFIELD (1874-)

John Masfield grew up in the West of England. While still a lad, he learned, by serving before the mast, the drudgery, the privations, and the dangers of a sailor's life; but he never lost his passion for the sea and for ships, as many fine poems written in later years attest (see *Salt Water Ballads*, "Ships," "Dauber"). After a good deal of knocking around the world—as sailor, farm-hand, and at one time bar-tender—he adopted the profession of letters and settled in Berkshire; and since about 1912 he has been generally recognized as one of the two or three outstanding figures among contemporary English-speaking poets.

In 1896, living at the time in Yonkers, N.Y., Masfield first began to read poetry, as he says, "with passion and system." It was Chaucer who opened his eyes to "what poetry could be"; but others,—especially Keats, Shelley, Milton, and Shakespeare,—enlarged a native capacity for feeling and expression in which reverence for the authentic tradition of English poetry has been united with indubitable originality. Like Conrad in fiction, he is at once realistic and romantic. The quest of beauty, the glamor of romance, which is felt in such a lyric as "Tewkesbury Road" (page 652), is certainly no stronger in Masfield than his attachment to quiet English fields and countrysides, and all those "heartfelt things past-speaking dear" which make up for humble men the life of the emotions and the spirit. In this intensity of feeling for the soil and the simple lives lived closest to it, Masfield is like his contemporaries A. E. Housman and W. W. Gibson, and even reminds one now and again of Burns and Wordsworth.

Masfield's characteristics are most

fully exhibited in a series of long narrative poems: "The Everlasting Mercy" (1911), "The Widow in the Bye-Street," "Dauber" (1912), "Reynard the Fox," "Enslaved," and "Right Royal" (1920), "King Cole" (1921), and others. With these may be mentioned the poetic drama "Philip the King" (1914). The themes are varied, and the quality uneven. The earlier narratives, notably "The Widow in the Bye-Street," suffer from prolixity, unsuitability of stanzaic form, uncouthness of language, or an excess of the humanitarian impulse — flaws not wholly compensated for by passages of great power and beauty, like that containing Saul Kane's vision of Christ the Plowman at the end of "The Everlasting Mercy." (Compare this poem with Wordsworth's "Peter Bell"; see the note under "Simon Lee," page 657, above.) But, outgrowing any unsoundness in the substance of his art as he perfected its expression, Masefield has achieved a mastery of rapid yet sustained story-telling, an almost Chaucerian command of telling phrase, and often a superbly lyrical handling of the great moments of action. Other writers, among them Alfred Noyes and W. W. Gibson, have had a share in the recent revival of the long narrative poem, but none has yet equalled the brilliant performance of Masefield in his masterpiece, "Reynard the Fox."

Though an admirer of Whitman, Masefield has avoided the fast-and-loose rhythms of the American poet's disciples. His ear is attuned to traditional English stanzas, and for the most part he has employed well-tried metrical forms, such as ballad stanzas made popular by Kipling, the heroic couplet, and the octosyllabic couplet. The seven-line stanza used in "Dauber" and elsewhere is copied from Chaucer. In poetic diction, on the other hand, he has been unconventional, showing no trace of Victorian circumspection in the phrasing of unpleasant facts. Indeed, the roughness of language in his earlier poems was startling to a genera-

tion nourished on Tennyson, Longfellow, and Mrs. Browning.

As notable as his advance in narrative verse is Masefield's development in the poetry of reflection, illustrated by the two sonnets in the text. Sensitive to the intellectual and spiritual difficulties of his age and profoundly stirred by the catastrophe of the Great War, in which he performed non-combatant service at the front, he nevertheless is not among the prophets of despair. In this portion of his work he does not always succeed in perfectly articulating his subtle thought; the idea may become so thin-spun or the feeling so complex as to leave the reader groping. But a large number of single passages and a handful of entire poems achieve the union of faultless expression with what Masefield himself called, speaking of his great predecessors, "the depth, force, beauty and tenderness of the English mind."

Masefield has a volume of short plays and several works in prose. In addition to "The Everlasting Mercy" and "Reynard the Fox," already mentioned, students should surely know "August, 1914" (the best of his war poems). Among the finest of his later lyrical and reflective poems are those published in the volume with "Enslaved."

MEN ARE MADE HUMAN

The thought resembles — with a difference — one that runs through Browning's poetry.

(652.) 14. *good days*: days of good fortune.

AH, WE ARE NEITHER HEAVEN NOR EARTH

2. *uses and despises both*: Observe how this is illustrated in lines 3-8.

13-14. *The ringing scene* etc.: alluding to the arts of painting (perhaps also poetry) and sculpture.

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